

IMPRIMATUR.

Carolus Alston, R.P.D. Hen.
Episc. Lond. à Sacris.

Febr. 12.

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S I X
SERMONS

(Preached before the
Late Incomparable PRINCESS
QUEEN MARY,
A T
WHITE-HALL.

WITH
Several *Additions*, and large *Annotations*,
to the Discourse of Justification by
Faith.

REV.

By GEORGE BRIGHT, D.D.
Dean of St. Asaph, and Chaplain in
Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N,
Printed by J. H. for Walter Kettilby, at
the Bishop's-Head in St. Paul's Church-
Yard, MDCXCV.

Dean of the Faculty and Chaplain in
Ordinary to the Bishop.

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TO THE
KING'S

Most Excellent

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MAJESTY.

SIR,

THIS small Volume was designed, humbly to crave the Acceptance of your late Royal Consort, that most truly Excellent Princess; who not only heard, but relished Discourses proper for her Edification. These present ones dare pretend only to an Attempt, and endeavour

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

deavour for such a Purpose. But she is for ever gone from hence, where her vertuous and pious Soul had neither Books nor Company good enough for its Entertainment! May her just Character be preserved, fresh and fair, to the last of Time! may her goodly Presence strike the Imagination of every one who enters into your Royal Palaces, that her exemplary Vertue, Piety, Prudence and Sweetness may never be forgotten there.

Forgive me, Great Sir, if I for once lightly touch the Wound, not only of your own Royal Heart, but also of the Hearts of all your Subjects, except here and there a Self-interested, weak and peevish thing, or two, in this matter, whatever they may be else-where.

But

The Epistle Dedicatory.

But as this severe Providence hath brought with it a mighty Loss, and not reparable to Your Majesty one way; so hath it given you a mighty Advantage another; for all the Affections and Hopes which your People had divided between two, are now publickly vested in, and settled upon Your Majesty's Person alone. And we hope, and pray, that as God will continue your own Portion of his Blessings to you, so he will not withhold hers from you. So that now your force being doubled and united too, cannot probably be much longer resisted, by your haughty and malicious, though puissant Enemy.

That God would continue and multiply his Blessings upon Your Royal Head, fill your Heart with Piety, Wisdom and Integrity in all your Counsels, prosper your Arms for the Chastisement of Tyranny, Violence

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and Injustice ; for the Peace, Safety,
and Universal Happiness of your Peo-
ple, and all *Europe*, is the constant
Prayer of

Your Majesty's
Most obedient Subject,
and Chaplain,

George Bright.

THE

THE
PREFACE
TO THE
READER.

I *I hath been my Aim in these ensuing Sermons, as it hath been always my Endeavour in all Discourses of the like Nature, to represent the Duties and Doctrines of our Religion plain and reasonable, that the real and great Advantage which it hath above all others may be manifest, and the Cavils and Contempts of irreligious Men may be put to silence and shame. Nor can I think, whatever some Difficulty may do, that Unintelligibility or Absurdity in any Religion ought to commend it to any; I am*
sure

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*sure it never will to inquisitive, considerate, and honest Men, who are the best, though infinitely the least part of the World. Such, I mean, who ask Questions, and examine things in Religion, not to shew their Subtilty, or pose Men, not to disgrace anothers Profession, or to get room and ease for Licentiousness, or to make themselves and others greater Scepticks, and doubt, and droll more: but like the Noble Beræans, to see whether things are so or no, that they may know more, and be satisfied in matters of so great Concernment, that they may not be abused, led into Errour, and kept there by Force, Confidence, or bare Authority. Such as these, I think, are to be taken care of, that they be not justly scandalized, or offended at Religion. Nay, they are in the first place to be regarded, who are not only intended surely by God to be saved as well as the Vulgar; but may also be great Instruments of the Instruction and Confirmation of others, and the Establishment of the due Esteem, and Reputation of Religion. Strange it is, that the weak, the ignorant, and the peevish, should be treated with so much Tenderness: but these should be rudely put off with the wise Application of Not many wise according to the Flesh, &c. And, Where is
the*

The Preface to the Reader.

the wise, where is the Disputer of this World? or perhaps with the Reproach, and Backbites of Indifferents, and Underminers of Religion.

This way of teaching and preaching the Christian Religion, as it is at all times just, and of solid Advantage to it, so is it now become necessary. There are very many in this Age, more than formerly, inquisitive, knowing, used to a more accurate Exercise of their Understanding every where in Divine matters, as well as Natural, Moral, and Political. These will not be put off with general, confused, figurative and obscure Notions, nor with false, uncertain, remote Reasonings; they will know what, and why they believe.

And hitherto is very well, the present Age being happy in it, whatever others may please to think: And had it been thus for some Centuries before us, a Thousand Falsehoods and Fopperies had never crept into Christian Religion; which have already, and yet will cost the World so vast an Expence of Labour, and fill it with infinite Troubles, and Unquietnesses, to drive them out again, and restore our Excellent Religion to its native and primitive Beauty.

But

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But as that Occasion of the Necessity of Clearness, and true Reasoning in Religion is good, so hardly any thing can be worse than the Licentiousness of our Time, when the generality of Men, (especially of those who pretend to any Wit or Breeding) have not only rescued themselves from the Slavery of Superstition, and usurped Authority, but shaken off even the natural Reverence of Mankind to true Religion, the sublimest Perfection and Glory of Humane Nature : Nay, they have run further yet, and pertly taken up a mean Opinion and Contempt of it, and all that belongs to it, as being nothing but Craft or Pedantry. Now these Men must be knocked down by weighty Reason, (for they slight the Holy Scriptures) and exposed to contempt themselves, for gentler Dealing will not do.

It must be shewn, that if they will make good their Title to the Man, they must be Religious and Christians too : And that there is nothing more Reasonable than a Christian's Belief, and nothing in his genuine Religion not adulterated, unbecoming of God, and disagreeable to Reason, if rightly sensed and understood ; that it is the weakness or ignorance of its Doctors and Commentators, and perhaps ever will be in some Degree, if any thing

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thing in it appear, or be represented otherwise; and that they have been infinitely to blame, who have been the Causes of Grudges, and Dissatisfactions in the minds of men, between Religion and Reason, and even made irreconcilable Quarrels between them, which should cohabit with constant and mutual Endearments and Assistances. I hope, and am apt believe, that such will be the next turn of Divine Providence, which invisibly governs the World, that the Holy Writings will every Day receive more light, and Divine Truths, more clearness from another Method, than what most Men make use of.

To conclude this short Preface, I am of opinion that now Miracles are ceased, this way of teaching the Christian Religion, accompanied with a judicious Affection, and followed with a sober and well governed Life, seems the principal means left in our Power, to restore it to its Beauty, Force, and just Authority, and the Church of Christ to its Purity and Honour; which now (as it is said) is crammed with conceited Drolls, Indifferents, and down-right Infidels; and in no part of Christendom more, than where it appears with its greatest External Splendor and
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The Preface to the Reader.

Domination. This very bad Estate of the Church, I beseech God to amend in his own time, and to introduce sincere and judicious Religion, neither Theatrical, nor Fanatical.

G. B.

THE

THE
TEXTS
OF THE
Several Sermons.

SERMON I.

1 **C**OR. 15. 33. *Evil Communi-
cations corrupt good manners.*

SERMON II.

1 **P**et. 4. 4. *Wherein they think it strange
that you run not with them to the same
Excess of Riot, speaking evil of you.*

SER.

The Texts of the Several Sermons.

SERMON III.

Psalms 35. 5. I will confess my Transgressions unto the Lord.

SERMON IV.

Psalms 14. 1. The fool hath said in his heart There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works.

SERMON V.

Rom. 5. 1. Therefore being justified by Faith, we have peace with God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON VI.

2 Cor. 5. 19. To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them.

SER-

SERMON I.

1 COR. XV. 33.

Evil Communications corrupt good Manners.

I design from these words to begin (for little more can be done in so short an Exercise) a Discourse concerning Evil Examples ; which I take to be one of the most general, and too effectual obstructions of Reformation of Life and Manners. So powerfull for the most part, as to defeat and defy all the force, not only of some dull and noisy Sermons ; but also of the most wise, rational and eloquent Discourses, either spoken or written.

It is true, every ones particular experience gives in but too much evidence, that our Natures have been by some ways miserably corrupted from the womb ; that we never saw the light clear and innocent ; that our vicious inclinations came into the

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world

world with us: but it is as certain they had never been so numerous and multiplied, never so strong and violent, never so continued and lasting, were it not for the multitude and magnitude too of bad examples, perpetually passing before us, enticing and sometimes hurrying us with great violence, even against reclaiming Reason and Struggling Conscience. We set fire one to another, and like smothering Coals put together, we increase the heat of our lusts to such a degree, that at last they burst forth into a flame; and that sometimes so fierce, that no-body dares to approach so near as to allay or slacken them. *Vivitur exemplis.* The rules of Mens lives for the most part, is what they see other Men do, not what they are taught, and what in sober temper they dare not deny they ought to do. Precepts are of small force against this, and are as little able to withstand it, as a grave Senator with his wise and eloquent Orations, the rude charge of a Troop of boysterous Soldiers.

I know there are sometimes examples of good and happy Influence, and we are not so far to discourage those that are, or those who are fairly inclined to be good Men, as to tell them, that they are all alone, and so always like to be; that they'll never
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make one Profelyte, and it is well if they can secure themselves. For the Conversation of a wise and vertuous Man, especially joyn'd with a goodness of Nature, may move, and sometimes effectually convert the Minds and Manners of those who are constant witnesses of it: but alas, it is a thousand to one perhaps otherwise; and all to be expected, is, that if you live virtuously and piously, some few will commend you, but rarely any imitate you.

The number of good examples is very small; and when we have in our view those of both kinds, we are all more apt to run to the worst side, by reason of the most unhappy inclination and pence of our nature. *Quoniam dociles imitandis-----turpibus & pravis omnes sumus.*

To which we may add the observation, that vertuous and religious men are generally of a more modest, prudent and reserved temper and behaviour: but contrariwise, vicious men generally are more confident, active and bold; which seems to inconsiderate spectators (infinitely the greatest number) witty, generous and pleasant, yea and reasonable too; because reason should precede confidence; and consequently their examples make greater impressions. But I somewhat prevent my self.

The words are a proverbial verse in *Menander* the Poet. Whether *S. Paul* had read it himself, or heard it often quoted as a very usefull proverbial Speech is not material. Something may be said of the true rendring of the words, before we lay out the matter of the Discourse, but very briefly.

There is some difference in the translation of *ἑμιλίαι* [*communications*] and *ἡδὴ χρεῖς* [*good manners*.] The first is translated by some *Colloquies*, *Narrations*, *Discourses*; by our own here *Communications*; by others *Conversation*, *using of Company*, or the like. I should think this last best. (1.) Because it is more general and includeth the former. (2.) Because Lexicographers expound it of both. *Phavor.* Ὀμιλεῖν ἀντὶ τῆ διζλέγεσθαι, ἢ ἀντὶ τῆ ἀνατρέφεσθαι. The word *ὀμιλεῖν* is taken for *discoursing*, or *conversing* with another. And in *Suidas* *ὀμιλεῖν* is συναναστρέφεσθαι, *to converse together*. As for *ἡδὴ χρεῖς*, *good manners*, a learned Expositor of our own would rather have it turned *good nature*, or *good dispositions*; *i. e.* such who are very pliable and easy to agree with others in their discourse and actions; which is usually out of weakness of understanding, and softness of nature together; and sometimes from an imprudent civility,

civility, (in which may be excess) and loathness to give offence, and willingness to please every body. But I should rather retain our own translation of *good manners*. Because although *κακὰ χεῖρος* may sometimes have such a peculiar signification as *good dispositions*, yet the other signification is far more frequent and more agreeable to the scope and context of the words. So that I should read the Text thus; *Evil conversations* [*i. e.* of some] *corrupt good manners*, [*i. e.* of others].

From hence we shall take occasion to discourse a while concerning the general influence of bad Examples, and how mighty an hindrance it is of the conversion and reformation of Sinners, and that under these heads :

I. Give the Reasons of the efficacy of Examples against Precepts.

II. Mention some of the Causes of the prevalency of evil Examples against good ones.

III, Shew how these evil Examples do operate.

IV. Give a caution or two to be observed in non-compliance with evil Examples.

V. Make an Inference or two.

I. What are the Reasons why Examples are more powerfull than Precepts, and consequently bad ones prevail easily against Precepts and Rules of Duty. They seem to be these.

1. Because Examples are more frequent than Instruction. For Instruction, the rules and reasons of our opinions and practice, are met withall only in a few good Books, (the Bible in the first place) or in Discourses and Lectures out of Pulpits and Desks, or in the Conversation of wise and vertuous Men. The first of these are seldom looked upon, except on the out-sides, and it is a very few hours of their lives that the greatest part of Men, and even of those of Education and Leisure, whose time lies upon their hands, spend in such an Employment.

What they do read is only something of Wit and Fancy, or fine Words, and perhaps Filthiness.

'Tis not easily to be imagined how much the World would mend, if Books containing true and rational Religion, Morality and Wisdom, were put into Men's hands, and frequently perused by them; if it were but once the fashion and humour of the Age, to furnish their Libraries and
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SERMON I.

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Memories and Discourses with the choicest Thoughts of the wisest and best Men.

The first place no doubt is justly here given to the Oracles of God, or the Writings of inspired Men well proved and well understood; and it is as certain that the Books of the New Testament, or Christian Religion contain in them the best Collection of Dogms, both for Speculation and Morality that ever the World knew. But because there are a sort of Men who will suspect Credulity or Cunning in the best Religion, or pretend to do so; it is to be wished they would then at least vouchsafe to look into the Writings of those, who have had no other Masters but Natural Light and Reason, and who have been in great Reputation for Wisdom and Knowledge, for now many Centuries of Years.

The Names and Sects of such as *Plato*, and *Tully*, and *Seneca*, and *Epictetus* with his Commentators, and that excellent Emperour *Antoninus*, who may seem better to deserve a Saintship than many foolish things in the Church of *Rome*, are still every where known and great. Their Morality though in some few instances defective, yet is generally excellent.

And it hath been known often, where Men have been by reading their Discourses shamed and reason'd into good Manners, and restrained in bad ones, and thereby mightily prepared for a great Esteem, and relish of the Christian Religion.

Wherefore it is reasonable to believe, that the Modern humour of calling, reading even of the choicest Books of the wisest Men, by the contemptuous Name of *Pedantry*, and justling out the Study of Books by the pretended Study of Men (not to help to mend but to corrupt Humane Nature; not to avoid but to imitate Vices, which otherwise they had never known; not so much to secure themselves and their Friends the honest and innocent, as to circumvent and supplant others) I say, that this modern Humour hath had a considerable influence upon the Degeneracy and Immorality of this Age; and is truly great *Pedantry* it self, if want of reason and judgment be as it ought, signified by that Name: And it may well seem to be set abroad, and with an Air of Manliness receiv'd, by some who could hardly write or read well, or at least in no other Tongue than what their Nurse taught them: like as some Fashions have been invented to cover some natural or viciously contracted Infirmities.

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The Truth of the Case is, as I think, and which will do no harm to most Men to remember, that the generality of Men are the worst Books that can be read, and the Study of good Books approved by the wisest, which contain Men's Thoughts, Passions, Actions, Laws, Rules and Precepts, what Men have thought, done, and should do, is the best Study of Men.

Though the other too managed discreetly for honest and vertuous Ends is a great improvement for any, and even necessary for many Employments and Stations of Life. And then for Pulpit-Discourses or others of the like Nature, they are but rare likewise in comparison of Examples, which occur every Hour; and many of them too, as they sometimes should, contain Matters of Faith more than of Practice; and when they are practical (to mention it by the bye) they are but too little regarded, though they want not Eloquence, Reason and Judgment; or at least such both Matter and Dress as may be most proper for the Auditory.

Finally the Conversation of wise and good Men is seldom to be had, few Men's Company being instructive; or else more in Matters of Speculation than Practice, more in other sort of Knowledge, than in
wise

wife and usefull Observation in practical Religion, and good Manners.

But on the other hand, Examples are in our view every moment almost, except we be of that small Number who converse much with the dead and the absent, (I mean Books) and with themselves. Which were it more frequent and intermixed seasonably and discreetly with Experience and Conversation, would much secure us from the Corruption of the Examples of Vice and Folly; of which otherwise we are in very great danger by reason of their frequency, notwithstanding the Precepts and Rules and Exhortations which are to oppose and hinder them.

2. A second Cause of the greater Efficacy of Example above that of Precepts is, that Examples are Objects of Sense and Imagination; but the Precepts or Rules of life only of Reason and Understanding. The Impressions of Example upon Sense, Imagination and Corporeal Memory, are deeper and stronger than those of Precepts upon our Understanding. And consequently upon our Passions, and then upon our Choice and Inclinations, that is, our Manners; and we may truly add finally, upon our opinions. For there is not a persuasion in an Hundred, which is not the effect more

more of affection and inclination than of reason and judgment.

The sense and meaning of Precepts are by few Men well conceived and apprehended, or but faintly and obscurely, because they are intellectual Objects.

For which reason History, but more especially *Biography*, or the History of the Lives of the most excellent Men in all kinds, where mental Endowments or the Qualities of Men's minds are represented as it were embodied with sensible Circumstances, written by judicious and virtuous Men, seems the most proper and effectual Way, for the good Instruction of the Generality of Men.

3. A third Cause of the prevailing Influence of Examples, if we consider the whole Life of Man together, is the early precedency of it to that of Precepts and Instructions. We are capable of observing and receiving great Impressions from, and imitating of Examples too, especially of those whom we love and esteem, before we know what we do, or come to the use of any Reason; much more of so much as to understand a good Instruction or Precept.

The first is from our very Childhood, the second rarely comes before we arrive at an Age thought fit to manage an Estate, and

and it is well if we then see it. So that we have been under the power of Examples, and are formed usually by them, before we are capable of the Discipline of an Instructor or Tutor.

Whence it is that men seldom much change the Inclinations they have contracted to that time ; and generally if by good example and government we are well season'd and temper'd to that Age, or some few years beyond, we seldom prove at least very bad. Although by long and frequent ill company and example, too great a part may be undone again, and sometimes all spoiled, which is very rare, because it is very difficult to obliterate those early characters and impressions so often repeated.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them, ſaith the Apoſtle in that excellent Epistle, Eph. 5. 11. Ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἀπ' ἐσθλῶν, &c. *From the good you'll learn good, among the bad you'll surely grow worse :* like to that of the Wise man, Prov. 13. 20. *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise ; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed.* *Aspice quid faciunt commercia, venerat obſes.* The Youth once was very innocent, behold what he is now ; how strangely changed
by

S E R M O N I. 13

by lewd company? לא תחבר לרשע Associate not thy self to a wicked man. These and such like are the Sayings of the Scripture, and the wiser sort of men, which do but remind us of the efficacy of examples upon our manners, and that far beyond the power and force of all Precepts, Instructions and Directions.

Nor do I yet know how this prevalency of example may be prevented or remedied, but either (1.) by a more than ordinary felicity of temper from the birth, whereby we are enclined to use our Reason more than our Senses, and are capable of giving Precepts and Examples too: or, (2.) by the providence and grace of God, which may happily order the condition of our lives, or even immediately work upon our minds, and particularly by afflictions: or finally (which is most in our own power) by some considerable retirement from too frequent and tumultuous conversation, and accustoming our selves to Reading and Thinking. That be spoken to the First General; viz. the Reasons of the Efficacy of Examples against Precept.

II. The Second is, the Reasons of the prevailing influence of bad Examples against good ones. Why ill Examples do so much

much more harm, than good ones do good, we may observe these among others.

1. Evil examples are infinitely more numerous. We can hardly light upon a good one, we can hardly miss a bad one. Good ones we can hardly see any, bad ones we cannot but see many. The High and the Low, the Rich and the Poor, and the Middle too. It hath been thought indeed that this last sort of men are generally the most Sober and Religious; because great and rich men think themselves above God and Religion, poor men below it. The one behave themselves as if God Almighty dared not to take notice of them, the other as if he would not; both equally mistaken.

But suppose it so: yet Bad examples far out-number the Good among all ranks and conditions of men, though of different vices according to their respective temptations: of different particular Vices, but the same general want of the sense of Vertue, of Conscience, and the fear of God in all.

And now if the number of Good Examples be so small in proportion to Bad ones, how much greater will the influence of these certainly be? For if we observe, 'tis frequency and repetition of thoughts and affections and actions, which form our Manners. Those Objects which we
most

most frequently and generally converse withall, which possess our thoughts, have the command of our affections, and consequently our inclinations and actions. We seldom think or talk of, love, hate, desire, delight in any but them.

And this is the reason why in a Family small or great, and in Palaces themselves, the single example even of one or two of the greatest in it, though deservedly honour'd and beloved too, doth so little good upon all the rest; though it would otherwise be far worse. It is because they are very many against one. And how much less is it to be expected that in a place consisting of many scores or hundreds of Families, the example of one or two whose business it should be to back their instructions with good ones, should have any visible good effect, unless their number be increased, (which would become the Ecclesiastical and Civil care too) or some more be pleased to give their assistance, and make up a number.

2. But Secondly, the Greatness of bad Examples is another cause of their greater influence. I do not know but that in proportion to their number, there may be as many Religious and Vertuous persons in the Superiour as in the Inferiour Ranks of men,

men, and that with more judgment and generosity : But still the *greatest* part of the Great, the Potent, the Honourable, the Rich (the more is the pity) are of the bad side. Though in the whole lump of all sorts of men put together infinitely the Major part (in their practices at least) should vote for the licentious and vicious side; yet it would not have near the influence it now hath, were not the Major part of the Great on that side too, and of the same Party to head and lead them. So that it appears, it is not only the number of Voters, but also the power and greatness of them, that makes ill example go so far and prevail so much. Were it the property of the vulgar and inferiour sort only to be Irreligious, Immoral and Dissolute, we should soon see that Party decrease and generally desert both in inward Principles and outward Practices. One excellent example of a great Man would be *πολλὴν ἀντιπαραστήσειν*, outweigh a great number of small ones. The generality of men far from wise, first esteem the Men and then the Manners. At least the dignity and height of a vicious man makes that Vice seem little and tolerable if not honourable, which were it only seen in those of lower place, would be thought contemptible and punishable.

Alex

Alea turpis.

*Turpe & adulterium mediocribus, hæc ta-
men illi*

Omnia cùm faciant, hilares nitidique vocantur.

We admire men for their power, pomp and wealth, and then all that belongs to them, leaving not out their very vices too. Like as the *Pagans* of old, not only deify'd their Heroes, but built Temples and erected Altars to some of their flagitious actions and abominable crimes; as *Tully* somewhere complains.

On the contrary the poor and mean man's actions, according to the Wise-man's little History (*Eccl. 9. 14.*) though never so wise and beneficial too, for that very reason are not heeded or soon forgotten.

Indeed it is Truth and Reason, and not vulgar opinion only, that Power and Greatness, Ability to effect and bring to pass, is to be honoured; but then Wisdom and Goodness, which are to direct and determine that Power, deserve it much more. It is true, Wisdom and Goodness without Power are moveless and ineffectual things; but then Power without them may be most mischievous. Goodness without Power if it can do no good, yet it can do no
C harm:

harm: But power without goodness may be used to make miserable, if it be managed by Cunning, Pride, Malice and Ill-nature.

But above all is that Person honourable and amiable, where Greatness, Wisdom and Goodness are in Conjunction, as it is in God with Infinity. The Examples of such work marvellous Effects in their Sphere, and carry all before them. They have great force to change the very inward Springs and Principles of Men's Actions, their Opinions and Inclinations; at least they outwardly bind them to their good Behaviour. And oh! that Heaven as it hath begun among us, would go on to bless the World with such an Happiness, and refresh the Souls of Righteous men, grieved and tired with wicked Generations, by so beautiful and lovely a Sight. And here we cannot miss to make the Observation, how much greater obligations the Great are under, to look at their Conduct and Example, than others, and how much larger their Account will be for the Evil they have, and the Good they might have done, and what can be said by those for themselves, who because they are great already, will be greater than God himself who made them so, and take that liberty which he never used?

3. A third Cause of the greater influence of bad Examples is their Confidence, Promptness and Fierceness. Good men more generally (unless they be very happy in the Gifts of Eloquence, quick Apprehension and Courage all together) converse with Caution, and consequently are more sparing in their Speech and Actions, more modest in their Affirmations, more tender of the Reputation of their Conduct, more carefull of their own peace and satisfaction, more sollicitous concerning the influence of their Examples.

Now the confidence and boldness of bad Examples, is usually accompanied with some Wit and Freedom of Speech and Carriage, and some Passion, always with more vigour and life. Which things are more discernible and acceptable to most Company, than good Sense and Reason; and often make so great an impression, as almost to force themselves upon those who assuredly know much better.

There is also in such Confidence a certain heedlessness and negligence, which carries the Air and Appearance, and is some ingredient of Generosity and Courage, which first much commends the Persons, and then their Discourse and Actions, especially to those who are their Equals or

Inferiours, and are no wiser than themselves; though in other Circumstances where it may seem excessive or unseasonable, to understanding Men it is usually as offensive. Finally the confidence of bad Examples to the greatest part of Spectators, is a sign of assurance of Truth and Reason in what they say and do, at least of no great harm or folly; but where the former inclinations to imitation are back'd by appearing Reason, its force is irresistible.

On the contrary, Calmness and Reservedness seem lifeless, dubious, cowardly; and even when they are thought to be the Effect of Wisdom and Judgment; yet they are gratefull but to very few of the same temper, and the Examples of such reach the Generality with no force, or with very little impression.

Whence good Men may be advised, that there is place and reason sometimes for Freedom and a handsome Confidence in conversation (though many very wise may want that faculty) managed with a regard to the Measure, Seasonableness and other Circumstances, and with a Design to convey as opportunity may serve, some good sentiment and instruction.

It is a laudable and usefull Dexterity in conversation, to communicate wise and
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vertuous things with advantage, and to convey it acceptably, and particularly with a seeming heedlessness of what one is doing, when indeed it is the main Design to do it well: like as the discreet Physician may seem to his ungovernable Patient to be doing nothing of consequence, when he designs the administration of some effectual Remedy for his Disease.

4. The last Cause we shall name is the most general Corruption of Humane Nature, consisting principally in prevailing Inclinations to other Objects, above those to Religion, Vertue and Wisdom.

The depravation and vitiosity of our active Powers is this, that those Appetites and Inclinations, which should be moderate, governable and subservient, are the most violent, ungovernable and commanding.

Though this Cause be very general, yet it is not remote, but near and immediate. This is the reason why, supposing good and bad Examples equal in number set before us, and recommended alike advantageously, we should, except here and there one secured by a rare Felicity of Temper, or the Grace of God, without much deliberation enter our selves into the worst Company.

This is the reason, why, if Orations could be made with equal seeming Reason and Eloquence for Vertue and Vice, and we were the Moderators perfectly left to our own liberty without the restraint of shame, we should soon heartily determine against Vertue. This is the Reason at the Bottom, why one single Example of one great Man hath more influence than twenty of the prudent and vertuous, the wise and the good. 'Tis because our very opinions, as well as our practices, are perverted and corrupted. We esteem, admire, and love Power more than Goodness, to be great rather than good, to do what we list rather than what we ought. And then our general Veneration and great Opinion of the Great, inclines us to a particular promiscuous Approbation and Imitation of what he is and doth. 'Tis from this miserable inborn Propension of our Natures to Vice, heavy and forcible, that if sometimes by the most excellent and celebrated Examples, we are a little heaved upwards, that's all, and we presently flop down again all at once.

And sometimes they do not in the least move us; and all their beauty and lustre no more affect us, than if we were deaf or blind. 'Tis from hence till it be changed,
that

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that like the filthy Swine, we will never learn to be cleanly, though in the Midst of a verdant Meadow covered with innocent Sheep, if there be but one Puddle where we may wallow in the Mire; or like some naturally clownish and slovenly People, who will never be taught any decent Carriage and Manners, though always in the Company of those who are gentle and well-bred. Oh the deplorable Pravity and Degeneracy of Mankind! desperate and utterly incurable without a mercifull Touch by the Finger of God, and the special powerfull Influence of his Grace, preventing, following, assisting our earnest Prayers, and serious Endeavours, without which the Company of Heaven it self would never mend them.

They would still retain the Propensions and Inclinations, nay the Actions too if they could, of Devils and Brutes in the midst of Saints and Angels. These are some of the most considerable Causes of the prevalency of evil Examples against good ones, in Answer to the second Question.

III. How do these evil Examples operate? This is convenient to be known, that so we may the better prevent or obviate

viate their mischievous Influence. The several ways may be observed to be such as these.

1. By their Number, Variety and Constancy. They take up all our attention and observation; they wholly possess our thoughts. Evil examples are oft-times like the ill-designing Companions and Counsellours of some great Man not over-wise, who will not permit any other Company but themselves to approach him, nor suffer him to hear or know much more, than he hath from them. Sometimes we may be so unhappy in our almost constant Conversation, as to have little occasion to observe any thing that is good, or not so much, or so often as to make any impression. There are some Persons so brought up, surrounded always with such Company, that folly and vice are their perpetual entertainment, scarce ever hearing a wise Word, or seeing a wise Action. Swearing and cursing, and brawling, and railing, and drinking, and gluttony, and trifling, and dressing, and gaming, and wantonness, and at the best worldly drudgery or diversion, are set before their eyes, and upon their ears perpetually. They rarely hear but the very Names of Conscience, Wisdom, and Vertue, of Sobriety and Piety,
of

SERMON I. 25

of Prayers and other Exercifes of Devotion. They scarce know whether there be any fuch men or things in the world.

And it feems very likely, that were it not for the constant Publick Exercifes of Religion and Divine Worſhip; Piety, and Devotion, and Conſcientiouſneſs, and all other Vertues, but what are more immediately neceſſary for civil Society, for men's Dealing and Traffique one with another, would be ſo far neglected and thruſt into corners, ſo little any-where appear, that thouſands more would in a ſhort time be ignorant of there being any ſuch things at all. As it is now, how many are there who hardly ever ſee (ſo as to take any notice of) a pious well governed Family or Perſon, and when they do, they ſeem to them like Foreigners from ſome ſtrange Countrey, with an unknown Language, an uncouth Garb, and odd Manners; nay perhaps ſome would ſeldom hear of a God or Jeſus Chriſt, but in Oaths and Imprecations.

The Corruption and Degeneracy of the Gentile World in ſome parts of it, was ſo great before the Preaching of the Goſpel and the Doctrine of Chriſtianity came among them, that they wondred at the Chriſtians for abſtaining from the moſt abomi-

abominable ways in which they securely walked, of lasciviousness, lusts, excess of Wine, revellings, banquettings, abominable Idolatries. Nay they did not only think their Manners very strange, but they revil'd them for them. Their sober and vertuous Lives were not only matter of their wonder, but of their Reproach (1 Pet. 4. 4.) they had never seen nor been used to such things before. And it is beyond doubt, that there is but too much of this amongst those, who have indeed been admitted Members of the Church, and bear the name of Christians. From the time they were first entred by the Sacred Rite, they have heard little, seen less, and practised least of their Religion. The Families, and Relations, and Acquaintance among whom they have been brought up, living more like Heathens than Christians, and that none of the best sort of Heathens neither. And what can be ordinarily expected from those of any thing that is good, who have scarce seen any thing but what is evil?

(2.) But among others who have had so far the happiness of better Instruction and Conversation, that they are not altogether ignorant, or ill inclined, or insensible of what is good and vertuous, evil
exam-

examples soon bring most of them over to Imitation, by taking away the restraint of some shame and fear, which they were before under. Few persons at the beginning of evil courses, are so hardy and impudent, as not to stand in some awe both of themselves and others; of their own Consciences, and other mens opinions concerning them, and the consequences of them. As bad as our Natures are, there are very few who do not at first boggle at many vices; they blush and hang back at them. Such as are Drunkenness, Swearing, Fornication, Lasciviousness, Prophaneness, Disrespect and Contempt of the wise, sober and grave, or in general of their Superiours. But let but two or three of the bolder and worst of them begin, and how soon shall you see the rest to follow; and when their number is increased to a multitude, how fierce and insolent do they soon grow? They are backward and cowardly oft-times, till they are entred into villainy by some experienc'd Practitioners, or by some one of note who leads them the way; but perhaps being once entred they go beyond their Patterns, and outdo those who taught them. Now when once natural modesty, shame and fear of the reproof of their own Consciences, whether well or ill informed, and

and of the judgments of others are taken out of the way, then those, as natural inclinations to the vices of evil examples have more their liberty, take their swing, and on their very motion gather strength and celerity. We see in a Rabble got together in a riotous and unlawfull manner commanded by Authority to depart, every one afraid at first to disobey or affront it, till one more impudent and fierce than the rest makes an attempt. And the violence of Robbers at first trembles more than they whom they set upon and rifle. And amongst the most desperate and bloody Ruffians hired to murder some person of Innocency, Eminency and Merit, every one is afraid to strike the first stroke; but that being once given, the rest soon fall on.

(3.) Evil Examples work their effect not only by removing and taking away the shame of Vice, but by making men ashamed of Vertue; and this especially when they are numerous and great. They make men ashamed and afraid to be vertuous and good, both positively and negatively; both to do that which is good, and not to do that which they know to be evil. Men well dispos'd and inclin'd are oft fearfull to give offence, to appear singular, to break company, even when their conscience and dis-

discretion tells them, they omit to do what they ought ; and what they do is not only foolish, but plainly unlawfull. Although the Man who thus practiseth be not so bad as he that gives a bad Example, or is as ready to follow as the other is to begin ; yet he is far from being so good as he should be ; nor indeed if it be his habitual Temper and more frequent Carriage is he to be deemed a good Man. For it is a sign he fears the displeasure of Men, more than that of God, and *loves the Praise of Men, more than the Praise of God* (John 12.43.) like the chief Rulers who believed on Jesus, but dared not to confess and own him. We are generally like the ordinary sort of Soldiers in the Field, who either very willingly change sides at any time with their Commanders and Comrades, (which is a further step still) or else at least they are afraid of the reproach of their Company. Whereas we should heartily engage in and espouse the Cause of Vertue and Religion, and then stand to it : that if it be possible we may keep others from deserting them, or recall them again. The truth of it is, we want courage generally in so just and honourable a Cause, when we do not want some Approbation and fair Inclination to it. Which if it should be said to some Men in
other

other matters, would hardly be let pass without a challenge. We want some resolution to follow Vertue and Piety boldly. We are much more foolish and timorous in our Manners than our Fashions, for we will not follow these if we find them improper or inconvenient for us; but those we generally do, though in our discretion and conscience we condemn them as foolish and hurtfull, both to them who lead and follow too. It would make an honest Man of ordinary Spirit ashamed, to see those who will take no other Affront but upon the point of a Sword, to sneak and be cowardly in the Cause of Vertue and Goodness, which they themselves justly esteem. We not only dare not draw our Swords (that's not desired) but not so much perhaps as speak in their behalf, when they are unjustly reproached and despised. We draw in our heads (indeed silence may be in some Cases both most proper and fit) or rather take part with their Enemies, and second perhaps their jeer with some conceited humorous Wit of our own, and this as hath been said to please others against our own Consciences. Thus evil Examples seem principally to keep us bad, and make us often appear indeed worse than we inwardly are : but there

there is great danger if we still keep such company, and use such practices, we shall really soon be as bad as we seem. But,

(4.) The operation of evil Examples is yet more immediate to fix, or to alter, and change the very Temper and Inclinations of our minds, and in great part our opinions and judgments.

The great proneness of our Nature to imitation every one knows, and 'tis one of the first signs of reason which appear in Children. And if there be no particular impediment in our Nature (much more if there be any disposition to it) we take that first which first comes, and most frequently presents it self to us. Thus we act, we speak, we chuse, we delight in, we hate, we admire, we despise as we see others do, (especially those whom we love and esteem) without any design of imitation, and we do not observe or know it our selves, unless others take notice of it and tell us so. We hear Children and young People, and those of inferiour condition at every turn, saying, they love such a thing as their Eye, and they hate to do this, or that, (the one perhaps a trifle, and the other good or of no great harm) for no other reason, but because they have often heard others their Superiours say so.

Now

Now if we often so speak, act, chuse, relish, love, hate, &c. it soon begets in us habitual Inclinations to, or averſations from certain Objects, and in time ſo ſtrong and obſtinate, that we cannot for the preſent be, or do otherwiſe, nor ordinarily weaken or deſtroy them, but in a long time, by a great change of the circumſtances of our conditions, and by the inward grace and aſſiſtance of God himſelf. And theſe habitual Inclinations are called our manners, our temper and conſtitution of mind; by which we are, and are called good or bad Men. According to theſe we are eſtimated, and ſhall be treated by God, who better knows them than we do our ſelves. Now our manners being in this faſhion corrupted by evil Examples and Converſation, our opinions and judgments will at leaſt in great part be ſoon ſuitable to them.

It is in the power of Man to believe what he liſts, unleſs it be ſome immediate Axiom; ſuch as the whole is bigger than its part. And even there too a Man may confound, darken, perplex, and indiſpoſe his mind in ſuch manner, as not to diſcern ſo clear a Truth; and then he can much eaſier turn himſelf away from regarding it, and conſequently he can ſuſpend his
judg-

SERMON I. 33

judgment, or not actually believe it if he please.

It is naturally consequent to all other Inclinations, to be enclin'd to believe and judge that to be true, which may most gratify and please them. When therefore by evil Examples we are sway'd and bent to that which is Evil, and brought to delight in it, we will perswade our selves contrary to what we thought before, that it is even laudable, or at least of no great harm, and therefore tolerable, and a matter of jest more than Reproof.

Our Lusts and unlawfull Affections by the Influence they have upon our Wills, bribe our very Consciences, and bring them over to plead and argue on their side, or at least to excuse and extenuate them; to call Evil good, and Good evil, put Darknes for light, and Light for darkness. These are defiled Consciences, as the Scripture speaketh: and how deplorable is the condition of such Men, whose light is worse than darkness, and whose very guide betrays them, and leads them to sure destruction, not suspecting or fearing any such matter. Besides our opinions are changed by evil Examples another way. Most men have no other reason for their practice, to believe it lawfull or un-

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law-

lawfull, wise or foolish, but only the Intimations of their own Consciences, and the Testimony of others. Now evil Examples invalidate both these, and first the Testimony of others against any Vice. When we see so many confidently and securely indulge themselves in it, we are apt to believe, that they think it a passable or commendable thing. And as they seem to think no worse of themselves for it, so will they not of us; and a great many more may be of their mind. And then consequently it weakens the credit of our own Consciences with us too. We begin to suspect, and at last we conclude, that they have been hitherto but ill informed; that we are superstitious and more timorous than we need to be, through natural Temper, Education, want of use and experience.

Thus by this time we may more distinctly see the ways, how evil Examples make their attack upon us, and the method of their proceedings, and being before-hand advised and admonished thereof, we may, if we in good earnest be willing, and wise, prevent their most dangerous and ruinous Influence upon us.

IV. In the Fourth place, I am to give a Caution or two to be observed in Non-compliance with evil Examples, to secure our Prudence and Innocency: They are but two. (1.) In respect of the matter of our Actions. (2.) In respect of their End.

(1.) As to the matter, the most general Advice is, that we be well assured, that the Examples be really evil. One of the most certain signs of which is, a thing's being universally forbidden in the Scripture, and if we can be equally assured of it by true Reason too. That which is prohibited by God universally, hath certainly in every particular Action more mischievous than good effects; though we may not see it at present our selves, or be able to make it appear to others; and therefore it is not at any time to be done. As contrariwise, that which is universally commanded hath more good than bad, and therefore is never to be omitted. In things therefore that are thus forbidden or commanded, compliance with others, to do, or not do as they would have us is never justifiable. If Company, Conversation and Custom desire us, and God forbid us; if they forbid us, and God command us, it is no question, whom we are to follow.

But because we are oft-times liable to great mistakes, we are hear to endeavour sincerely to be well informed, as was before advised. We may judge that universally forbidden or commanded by God, which truly is not so. We are to avoid singularity through ignorance, or misinformation in our Duty, and consequently giving a needless offence, and exposing our selves to the contempt of the ill-natur'd and ungenerous, or to the pity and disesteem of the best sort of men for our weakness or suspected Contumacy and Self-will; sometimes to the loss of our secular advantages, whereby we may not only live comfortably, but perhaps very usefully. And then we are with the same sincerity to judge as truly on the other hand too, and not to believe that lawfull which is really forbidden, or that not to be commanded which is really so: and consequently to take an undue liberty, and in a more proper and important Sense give offence. And because of our general proneness to indulge our selves, and live easily, we have more reason to be vigilant and carefull over our selves in this last Extream.

2. The second Caution is in respect of the End. We are to take care (and there is

is need of it) that we refuse not to conform to, and follow received Practice and common Example, or to comply with company at any time, no not in things materially evil, out of pride or affectation of singularity; not out of an humour to contradict the World, and controll others; to be leaders, not followers; not out of a design to be pointed at and shewed, that such an one will not do so; not out of a sly intention to be known, talked of, esteemed as a Man of Courage, Resolution, Self-government; not out of surliness and unwillingness to gratifie others. These are all naughty and ill principles and ends, which defile and pollute, otherwise materially and eventually very good, profitable Actions; and are very apt as in other places. So here to creep into our minds; and either to thrust out, or at least mix themselves with those that are worthy, just and reasonable. There are some, and very many specious, external Carriages and Behaviours, to which men pay a great deal of Reverence, which have no better Spring, at least in great part. Whence then must our diversity of manners from the evil Examples of the rest of the World proceed? From Charity to the World, because thou seest such Courtes and Carriages to be foolish,

lish, unworthy of Men or Christians, noxious and mischievous; from prudence, because thou knowest them to be unworthy, or unbecoming thy self, nor usefull, nor safe; but indecent, troublesome, hurtfull, and of dangerous, bad consequence here, and hereafter: In few words, from Piety, Charity, Prudent Self-love, and Care of our selves. Our Carriage and Conduct here will be very beneficial and effectual, if the same Spirit and Temper appear in the rest of our Conversation, shewing our selves generous, and civil, and easie, and willing to comply, and gratify in things which are not unlawfull or very inconvenient, or have no good reason against it. And even where we refuse sinfull and incommodious Compliances, we are to appear unwilling to give offence, or not to gratify; but that our Charity to our selves and others, and even to our Companions themselves: Our prudence and our Duty to God, oblige us necessarily so to do.

To conclude this Caution we must take care to avoid two Extreame. The one Pride; which word and vice I take so generally as to comprehend all particulars of affectation of singularity, contradiction, &c. just before warned against, as so many kinds, and many more

more which may be named. The other is too much softness, too great loathsomeness to offend or displease for the present, either out of love or fear ; when we know in our Consciences, that it will be better for the future, both for them and us, not to gratifie or comply with them: and to this infirmity that which we call good Nature (otherwise a valuable thing) is obnoxious, and will often betray us, if we do not (as we ought, all other natural dispositions and inclinations) regulate it by a judicious and resolved Vertue.

V. The fifth and last thing to be done is, to make an inference or two from what hath been said.

I. We are with great care to avoid giving bad Example. Certainly good Manners is a good thing, if there be any in the World ; and to corrupt a thing so good, so absolutely necessary to any tolerable subsistence in this or any other State, is the worst of Employments. Now the giving bad Examples tends to it, the following of them effects it. If any be so wicked as designedly to give an ill Example in any Vice (suppose Irreligion) and to make it their study or diversion to corrupt the World.

This seems to proceed from pure Malice against God and Men. But if we be only careless and heedless of what we do, tho' it be never so ill, and what others may do after us, it is at least want of good Government of our selves, and want of that kindness and charity which we owe to our Brother, and draws upon us the guilt of those sins, which our Examples have been the Causes of. Like as we should reckon that Man devilish and inhumane, and worthy of the severest Punishment, who knowing himself infected with the Plague, should mingle himself with all Company, and industriously or carelessly breath out his Pestiferous steams upon all he met.

But more especially are they concerned in this Admonition, whose Examples are of the most forcible and diffusive Influence. Such who are most eminent and conspicuous, with whom compliance and invitation brings great conversation, honour, and secular Advantages. The rich, the potent, the ingenious and learned, are like Stars of the first Magnitude, which draw all men's Eyes towards them; and we know how far it reacheth, and thanks be to God we know too how far it is prevented, when the Commands and Examples of Piety and Vertue come together from the
Throne

Throne it self; whose force we hope will in some time make its way through, and alter the Constitution of the whole Body, and drive out the Venom and Leprosie of Vice, which hath so long defiled and deformed it.

After Hypocrisie, Enthusiasm, Immorality, Impiety, and Contempt of all Religion, Superstition and Idolatry successively, we are in hopes to see a serious, enlightened and judicious Piety and Virtue; which shall not so much frighten as shame and reason Men out of Vice. And if, together with this, Virtue and Sobriety were always, among others, the Distinguishing Condition, as they ought to be, of Honour and all other Secular Advantages, a great work would soon be in great measure done: For I think Vice never yet had so much esteem as to have one small Martyr for it. But,

2. We are not to follow bad Examples when given. They can but tempt us, not force us; when the Text tells us, *That evil Communications corrupt good Manners*; the meaning is, That they have always a natural tendency to it; but not that they always effect it. We may prevent and defeat their Influence by Precepts of Wisdom, by Vigilancy and Resolution. We may learn, receive and possess our Minds with right

right and just Opinions, with good and wholesome Instructions and Documents, with generous Passions and Purposes. We may soon attain to the Capacity of looking upon Examples to be only Representations, not Reasons of our Manners, to help our Imaginations, but not Arguments, to determine our Judgments. We need not be either surprized or overborn by them. We may, we ought to discover, examine, confront and compare them with others, receive or reject them if we please. If we find them foolish, mean, impious or bad, we are not to be drawn away by their Greatness, Number, Impunity, nay, Encouragement too. For we need not be advised of a thing so common, that the Companions and Ministers of Vice may be cherished, honoured and rewarded; when Religion and Virtue are neglected and slighted as troublesome, uneasie and ill Company.

Thus we may behave our selves, and not only secure our selves, but many others, from the Infection and Contagion of foolish and wicked Examples. But it may be otherwise too, and we are always in very great danger of them. And truly, generally, as the state of the World now goes, they reach us, and have their mischievous.

SERMON I. 43

chievous and pernicious effects more or less upon us; which ought not to dismay us; but still to encrease our Caution, Courage and Resolution.

Indeed we have had too long an Experience of it, and have felt its Influence so deep, and almost universal, that it is not like in a long time yet to be worked and worn out by the most operative and powerfull Remedies that can be applied. We seem to have great need of a Confederacy here too, and all too weak and insufficient, without the Conjunction of the Supream Power to head and conduct it, which we may promise our selves. Never can Authority and Power be employed in a better Cause; in which they shall certainly have God on their side, his Assistance, Favour, Blessing and Reward; the Hands and Hearts of the best Men, and the Consciences of all, even of the very worst.

As for our particular, Let us list our selves under this Confederacy, and augment the number of Heaven's Forces against the Armies of Hell and Vice, and even by Multitude oppress them if we can: But if not that, at least, let us by Courage and Conduct make good our Ground, and keep our selves entire; not only receiving the boldest Attacks of Vice and Folly unmoved,

moved, but sometimes charging through the most resolute of their Troops. *And may the God of all Power and Victory, who is not an unconcern'd Spectator of the Endeavours and Prayers of his Faithfull Servants, multiply their Number, encrease their Zeal, Courage and Constancy, and in some measure grant them here present Success:* However, we are abundantly assured, that he will hereafter signally own their Service, and crown it with a glorious Reward.

SER-

SERMON II.

1 PET. IV. 4.

*Wherein they think it strange that you run
not with them to the same Excess of
Riot, speaking evil of you.*

WHEN first Christian Religion was introduced, and Societies which made Publick profession of it were formed, there never appeared a greater contrariety of Manners in the World, than there was between the Christians and all the rest of Mankind. The former were eminently pure, spiritually-minded, humble, just, and in all instances charitable; the latter most impure, proud, malicious, envious, cruel.

The Gentiles, except here and there a Philosopher, or a good Natur'd-man, were as much corrupted in their manners and lives, as inhabiting together upon this Earth could well bear. Their very Religion

46 SERMON II.

gion was the worst part of their condition, teaching them Beastliness and Cruelty to such excess, that it was necessary to be corrected by the light of Nature, and the supreme, civil Power; as the *Bacchanalia* among the *Romans*. Some of the Fathers justly reproach them, that their Religion taught them nothing of Morality, as the Christian Religion did: but only childish, superstitious, or beastly Rites and Ceremonies. And the Holy Scripture in several places, gives us abundantly to understand, the most lamentable condition of the Gentile World, when the Gospel or Christian Institution came first among

Rom. 1.

Ephes. 2. 4.

them; particularly the Epistles to the *Romans* and the *Ephesians*.

As for the Jews, though their Religion was good and wisely instituted, in that place which it had of the whole Divine Oeconomy and Providence over all Mankind from beginning to end; and although they had excellent Books of Morality, of which I reckon Piety and Devotion the principal part in their hands: yet both their inward manners and outward practice generally, were little better than that of the Heathens, except in one point of Idolatry.

They

They living every where promiscuously with the Gentiles, and under their Dominion, soon grew like them, retaining only what they could of the Rites of their Religion, and some true opinions concerning the Deity to distinguish them. *St. Paul* chargeth them with an universal Defection and Corruption in his Epistle to the *Romans*, Chap. 2. 3. and their own Writers are witnesses how wicked they were. And the *Talmudists* particularly had a Tradition, that just before the coming of the *Messias*, Impudence in wickedness should abound, as some think it will before his second Coming.

This was a deplorable State of humane Race; but considering the Ignorance and Darkness which had so long covered the face of the Earth; where they rarely heard or but suspected any thing better, it was not so much to be wondered at. But strange it was when they heard the Doctrine of the Gospel, or did but see the contrary manners and practisers of its Professors, that they were not all of them startled; and yet stranger that they should wonder at the Christians, that they would not live as they did. And yet so it was then with the Heathens towards the Christians; and so it is still with bad Christians,
little

little more such than in Name, and infinitely the most Numerous towards the Good, who are in Heart and Life obedient to the Laws of Christ. And that is the Observation as briefly as may be to be treated of.

Vicious and dissolute Men wonder that all others are not like themselves.

It is not to be doubted of, but that they have their Reasons for it, what-ever they be. And they are the same by which they use to justify and excuse themselves and all others, who are drawn to compliance with naughty Manners, and corrupted by evil Examples.

It shall be my business at this time to see what some of them are, and to give the strongest of them its full Answer.

We may conceive some of them to be these.

They say then, that as the World ever did, and now goes, to be Conscientious, Pious and Virtuous is, (1.) To be Singular, and to call all men's Eyes, and Talk, and Censures towards us. (2.) It is to be Solitary, Melancholy and Cheerless, when others are diverted, courted and crouded with good Company. (3.) 'Tis to be contemptible and ridiculous. (4.) To be revil'd and persecuted. (5.) 'Tis to undertake

dertake an impossible, or at least an extremely difficult, and consequently painfull thing. We have not time to speak any thing considerable to all these Excuses : For the present we'll take only the three last, and of them put the two first together more briefly : but the last of all, which seems the best they have, and is by experience found most to deter Men from the Resolutions of undertaking a vertuous Life, and bidding a final farewell to vicious Manners and Company, is that which we shall hear and answer more particularly.

(i.) In the first place then to abstain from the evil Manners and Lives of the bad; to joyn our selves to and practise with the good; the first being the generality of Men of all ranks and conditions, will expose us to much contempt, hatred and ill Treatment. We shall meet with neither favour nor justice. Such was the usage of the Christians by the Heathens. Here in the Text they are said to be *βλασφημῶντες* speaking evil, viz. of the Christians. No doubt their Tongues, and their Hearts, and their Actions went together; they reviled, despised, hated, and ill used the Christians, because they would not comply with their abominable Customs and Practices. And it is the same thing still in general (though there may
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be some difference in degrees, and some Circumstances) between the bad and the good, even of the same external Profession of Religion. Of which some of the Causes in few words seem to be, The foolish and false Opinions of Libertines (especially if great, who take licentiousness to be the privilege and property of their rank) that religious and conscientious Men are timorous, and mean spirited, because they dare not venture upon some Actions and Courses, which they fear not ; when it truly proceeds from their Judgment, Choice, and a great Mind ; or on the contrary they will have them to be proud and self-conceited, thinking themselves wiser than every body else, and on purpose contradicting common practice ; whereas 'tis true Wisdom and good Understanding, to fear God and depart from evil. 'Tis Piety to God, Charity and Compassion to the World, prudent Care of their own greatest Interests. Finally, they think, that the opposite Manners of good and vertuous Men reproach them first ; these by their courses of life which they take, in effect call them Fools, or perverse, weak, or wilfull. Which indeed is true : but it is the necessary signification of their Principles which they cannot help : nor are they willing if they

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they could, because they hope it may at last prevail upon some of them to be wiser, and to do better. At least they think themselves obliged to appear in, and for the Cause of Religion and Vertue, and not any way to contribute to the danger of the few good, or the confirmation of the many bad.

But let the Causes of this unjust usage of the Religious and Conscientious be what they will, 'tis confessed that the Matter of Fact is true; but it is denied to be a sufficient reason, either for the compliance of the good, or for the wonder of the bad, that they do not.

As if there were no better reason for Vertue, and living well, than the pleasing of Men; not one in 1000 of which have any reason at all for what they are, and do; but only humour, passion, appetite, and example of the most and worst. 'Tis true, he that discreetly and conscientiously will not go with a multitude to do evil, may be evil spoken of, and ill used by the blind, inconsiderate, or cowardly; but can never deserve it.

'Tis they, who are the foolish, and oft-times perverse and wilfull in their pernicious Folly; and therefore their Qualities to be despised, and their Persons pitied.

Let men give me better reason than I have for what they do, and I'll follow and thank them too. But this contempt of those, who have no other reason, but their confidence, number, and humour, or blind passions, and inclinations is to be contemned ; and will never move a Man of ordinary spirit or understanding, who knows what, and for what reasons he ought to do any thing. And the truth is the Argument for imitation of the many (great or small) in evil Manners to avoid being neglected, contemned, despised, frowned upon, or hated, reacheth only the more mean and vulgar minds, whatever they appear ; from which notwithstanding, they ought to be secured by particularly shewing and minding them, of the folly and injustice of it, in respect of God, our Neighbour, and our selves ; and that there is no comparison to be made which is worst, to be really an ill man, and to be ill-spoken of, or ill-used by ill men, through pride and ill-nature, or even by the better through mistake. For we'll take but that one consideration of our own true Interest, and a prudent care of our selves. Who would not take it for a Reproach, to be counted like a silly Sheep to drown for company, or prefer being wicked and miserable, with a Multi-

S E R M O N I I. 53

Multitude before being innocent and happy alone, least they should scoff or be angry with them for Cowardice, or breaking Company. Suppose nineteen of twenty should in a Frolick draw their Blood, or drink Poyson to the Ruin of Health, or endangering Life, doth any man think himself under the least Temptation to imitate such folly and madness, least he should be taken for a Dastard, or an ill Companion ?

These Similitudes are not impertinent, or improper, let men believe as they please. For wicked Courses of Life continued in, are and will be, as surely the death and destruction of our Souls, and often of our Bodies and Estates altogether, as some Wounds and Potions are mortiferous to our Bodies only.

Add to this the considerations of Piety to God, and Charity to Men. The good Man who reckons himself born for the Service of God, and to do good to others, as well as enjoy it himself, reasons well when he thinks himself the more obliged to honour God, and to preserve himself and others from the Infection of bad Example, when their Number, Confidence, and Security is so great, as to wonder, and despise, and treat hardly all those who

are not like themselves: the more the misery and folly, and impiety of the World encreaseth, he thinks himself the more bound to endeavour to lessen it, by saving himself, at least if he can do no more.

'Tis the most seasonable and necessary then to be the best, when the World is the worst, and men are generally running to their ruine. Such is the Apostolical Ad-

monition to Christians, to be
Ephes. 2. 15.

harmless and blameless the Sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, and to shine as lights in the World. Never more need of light, than in a gross and general Darkness, nor of the Mounds and Banks of resolute, virtuous Examples, than when the Floods of vicious ones threaten to drown all. After all this, we must not allow or grant too much to this Plea and Excuse, for Conformity to evil Examples, and bad Manners.

There are a great many wise and good Men (though too few) whose Commendation, Favour and Assistance, we shall not fail of by our retreat and separation from wicked Practices, though never so numerous and great, and then oft-times at least, if our Non-conformity be as discreet and prudent, as it is sincere and conscientious,
 those

SERMON II. 55

those very Persons who from the Teeth outward, reproach and slight us, will silently in their own thoughts esteem, and commend us; or if at sometimes, when upon the rant, and in the heat of passion, they may inwardly condemn and hate us too, yet at others in their sober Moods, when they are most themselves, they may be of another opinion.

And I think it is not to be doubted, that the Text speaks here only very generally; and that some even of the Gentiles, were struck and awakened by the light, and beauty of the innocent, vertuous, spiritual and heavenly Conversations of the Christians, and inwardly mov'd to esteem and admire them. Nay after some time, some even of those, who at first wondred at the Singularity and Novelty of their Manners were so affected, though they did not yet leave their own. For that we may observe by the way, that men may in some considerable Degree, approve, esteem, and love that in others which they do not practise themselves; the one costing nothing, the other much pains and solitude: and that therefore sincere Piety and Vertue, have not so many and fierce Enemies as from appearance may be thought. Besides, this excuse hath no place, when

the greatness of our Condition, and our advantageous Circumstances may be such, as to command Honour and Imitation of us; not to fear contempt or ill-usage, for not imitating of others; when it is thought our part to give Examples, not to follow.-- But as I have said, It is the last excuse of men for going along with the Crowd of the vicious; namely, the difficulty and painfulness of doing otherwise, that shall most enlarge this Discourse.

To follow a Multitude is always jolly and pleasant: but when our Nature sets us going too, it is little less than necessary, and the contrary impossible. Let us hear it at large.

2. They will then alledge for themselves, that Vertue and Sanctity to our Natures, such as they are born, and such as they are by long use and custom now made, are in the highest degree difficult and laborious, and consequently grievous and painfull, and next to impossible; but Vice is easie, and thence delightfull and pleasant. And it is certain, that one of the most general, and sure Causes of the beginning, and continuance of the Inclinations and Actions of humane Nature, is first Facility, and then Pleasure. What is painfull will either be never attempted, or soon left off.

To

SERMON II. 57

To speak more distinctly and properly :
We acknowledge (say they) some remainder of an appetite to Vertue, and moral good ; but we find an hundred others incomparably more forcible and strong.

Now to exalt Vertue to an universal Supremacy, and to preserve it there constantly ; to bring all other appetites and passions down to its subjection and obedience, so as to receive all their motions, their very being, end, and measures from its directions and commands, tell us whether, and how it may be done ? For the man void of all Honour and Love to God, nay an Hater of that most perfect and holy Nature, to be his devout Adorer and Imitator ; for the little selfish Soul contracted to a point to become great, and widen it self to his Countrey, Mankind, or even the Universe ; for the malicious and sower Ill-nature to be sweetned into Charity ; for the proud and covetous to desire and value no more of Honour, Power and Wealth, than what he may be able to manage to the Honour of God, his Sovereign, and the good of others his fellow Subjects, and for that very end ; for the voluptuous and luxurious to scorn any bodily Pleasures, or sensual Delights, any further than they are the Means and Instruments

ments of Piety, Charity, and our own spiritual and eternal Good; any further than they are necessary or usefull in this frail Life of Flesh, to remove the Hindrances, or to procure the helps of Vertue and Beneficence, of being and doing good. Thus to turn all the Motions, Inclinations; and Aversions of our Souls upside
 Eph. 4. 22, 24. down; *To put off the old man,*
 Col. 3. 9, 10. *which is corrupt according to deceitfull Lusts* (as the Scripture phraseth it) *and to put on the new man, which is created after God in Righteousness and true Holiness:* This, this is an undertaking most difficult, irksome, tedious, if not impossible to be ever performed; of which the small number of those, who but seem to do it, and the vast multitude of those, that never think of it, is an evident Argument.

And may we not well wonder at the first, who will adventure to turn head, and with sore labour perpetually tugg against the Stream of Nature, and almost universal Example? may we not well excuse those, who swim down easily with so violent a Tide, or permit themselves to be carried by it?

This is the Summ of their last Plea (and I think the best they have) made
 use

use of, by vicious and dissolute Men, for their wonder at those who will undertake to be better, and defence of those who are as bad as themselves. And to this we shall return, I hope, no insufficient Answer, and that in these particulars.

I. That Reformation and Conversion from Vice to Vertue, from Sin to Sanctity, however it is effected, is not impossible, needs no other Evidence than the eminent Examples of some, and the good ones of many. We confess that they are but few, comparatively: yet in various instances and degrees more than bad Men are willing to allow; who industriously diminish them, and will sometimes pretend to believe, that there is hardly any in sincerity and reality, but only for by-ends, and in outward appearance. But this is certainly false, and there are those in the World, who after impartial Enquiry and mature Deliberation of what is really true and good, (nor do they affect to be mistaken, as wilfully vicious Men do) are convinced, that Vertue and Holiness are the Perfections of their Nature, and the only Source of Felicity of Life; which leaves not there, but intirely possesseth them with the most inward inclinations of their heart to it, and with
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the most ardent Aspires to the utmost perfection of it their Nature can receive; and are so uneasie under the Delays, Hindrances and Oppositions they meet withall in this State, that they have oft-times much ado to secure their patience and dutifull Behaviour to God Almighty. That against the pretended impossibility.

2. For the great difficulty, pain; and pain we say, that it is not so great and frightfull as is usually imagined. For,

(1.) We are not alone and helpless, far from it. There is, in this design and resolution of rescuing our selves from the Dominion and Slavery of that evil One, of blind Concupiscence, contemptible Appetites, and pernicious Lusts, and of returning to our just Obedience to God, and Reason; there is, I say, one greater for us than all that are against us. The Grace of God is always ready to assist us. Nay, it is that which prevents us all in some degree or other with good Counsels and Desires, and causeth us to begin to look the right-way, to bethink our selves, to be serious, and not to play the children all our lives. This, if we cherish them, is more at hand still; and if conscious or suspicious of our own weakness, we by earnest Prayers implore it, and by our Endeavours con-

concur with it, we shall not fail of such a supply, which together with the Divine Providence disposing the circumstances of our lives, will render the Work much easier than was at first thought, and in some time delightfull. The Heathens themselves were not ignorant of Divine Operations and Influence upon the Souls of Men; but it makes a considerable, and in my Opinion a very august part of the Doctrine of Revealed Religion. But,

(2) It is truly said, that this difficulty of change from bad to good; of withdrawing from old but evil company and practice is principally at the beginning:

Τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδεῶτα θεοὶ περπατοῦσιν ἐνι-
κλιν' Ἀθανάτοισι, &c. Things are indeed by the Divine Disposition come to that pass, that Vertue is to be sweet for at the beginning; the way to it at first is steep and rough, but when the Ascent is mounted, there opens a spacious and smooth plain, which makes abundant recompence by its ease and delight. The suite, the progress of a virtuous and holy state of Soul, perpetually exercising itself in Acts of Godliness, Righteousness, and Sobriety, is full of pleasures, the most sincere, penetrating, constant and durable without any mixture, remorse, uncomfortable reflexions, suspi-

suspensions, or forebodings; nay multiplied by remembrances and hopes, which Vice never dared to pretend to.

When the first brunt is over, and the Inclinations of the mind set right, and restored to their primitive, just, and natural order and constitution (for Virtue was first, Vice super-induced) the great pain and difficulty then will be to commit a sin, to do a foolish or ill thing, and continue in it; the ease, the pleasure will be to acknowledge, condemn, and forsake it. Then the scales will be turned; not gratifying, obeying, submitting to a malapert Appetite, an insolent Lust, a blind Passion; but the denial, command, suppression, steady Government of all these by Religion and Reason, will be our glory, peace, and intimate satisfaction. They have been the Heathens too, who have said such things as these, of which sure many of these very Wanderers could not be ignorant. *Semita certè tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vi-tæ.* Much like that of the Divine Poet, *Great peace have all they that keep thy Law.* Now if it be thus (as most certainly it is) bad Men are mistaken in their plea, and much out in their reckoning, when they fright themselves and others from a good and virtuous life, by the painfulness

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fulness of it. For the tediousness and pleasure of an whole journey (such as our life is) would be very childishly estimated by the first mile or two. And yet further, (3) I think it most certain (that we may not shrink at the first onset) that the very first steps of change and conversion from bad manners to good, some of the first Acts of Repentance : (Such as are self-condemnation, indignation, sorrow, and contrition of heart for our most beloved sins, firm resolution utterly to forsake them, followed with watchfulness and endeavour, earnest prayers to God for forgiveness ;) I say, even these have that secret pleasure and satisfaction attending them, which out-weighs their trouble and difficulty.

'Tis true, to be disordered, ashamed, confounded and vexed at our wickedness and folly, to despise and reproach our selves, to pull from our hearts with a violent hand, that which hath had so long and kind an abode there, and still makes great resistance (for all cannot be done at once) this certainly by it self is no desirable condition: But then it is blended with, or immediately followed by a strange secret joy and satisfaction, diffused through the intimate recesses of the Spirit, from a sense of the beginning, recovery, and reconvalescency of
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our Souls; of their restitution to their natural constitution at the first birth of Souls, of the assured reconciliation and favour of Almighty God our Heavenly Father, and finally of an hopeful, nay, safe condition to Eternity. So that take all together, a Man may with great assurance affirm, that there is, or may be more of joy than sadness, more of ease and comfort than pain and sorrow in Repentance, the sowrest diet a good Man tastes of; and this proportion is still the greater, by how much the grief for sin is more penetrating and pressing, as being an evidence of its sincerity. A Penitent upon his knees sipping in his briny Tears as they trickle, may take down a more delicious draught, than he, who quaffs off his full Bowls filled with the choicest Liquors. Sincere Repentance is like relief under a heavy burden, or the setting a disjoynted limb, or the recovering of good appetite, clear health, and vigorous sense by a bitter Potion or two. So is it, I say, even now found by experience as unhappy as our nature now is; and those who are at present very hard to believe it, will never I am sure employ their time better, than to make tryal of it themselves.

All this, I doubt not, was most remarkably verified in holy *David*, one of the greatest

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greatest Souls that ever dwelt in an earthly Body, of which he himself be witness in several Psalms ; and it may be often observed in other good Men after such a performance, who without any design never appear more easie and pleased in themselves, and more innocently chearfull with others. Such then be the second Answer to the plea of the extreme difficulty, pains and pain in conversion and reformation, in correcting this propension of depraved Nature ; and quitting the most numerous evil examples : Namely, that we have the Grace of God to assist us, and render it more easie ; that the difficulty is principally at the beginning and first onset ; and yet that, even there the pleasure and ease far out-weigh the pain and labour ; and finally, that in the suite of a virtuous state of Soul exercises and actions, there are pleasures sincere, deep, constant, and durable, and but the sample and commencement of infinitely greater still. The difficulty and pain will lie on the side of Vice ; and that it is most true, that a sincere and generous good Man may find it more hard and vexatious to him to be brought to do an evil thing, than the most bold and accustomed sinner to do a good one. Go we on further, and,

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3. Suppose

3. Suppose if we please that which is false, the utmost difficulty, labour, and suffering throughout the whole course of a virtuous and conscientious life ; nay, suppose we may lose life itself for their sake, and in their cause ; have we never heard of any thing hereafter ? or have we satisfied our selves with a demonstration that we are not concern'd in that ? Will there be no reward for the righteous, no vengeance for the wicked ? had not these very *Gentiles* themselves, their *Elysian* Fields for the just, their *Tartara*, *Styx* and *Acheron*, and various sorts of never ending punishments for their wicked too ? Had not the *Jews*, many of whom were infected with the Heathen Manners, their *Paradise* for the Holy, and their *Gehinnom* for sinners ; if they did not believe the Fable, they assuredly did believe the moral of it, viz. the happy state of the good, and the miserable one of the bad, and that everlasting too, as might be shown.

As for Christians, do they not know, that in the day when God shall judge the World by *Jesus Christ*, he will render to every Man according to his deeds ; to those who patiently continue in well-doing eternal life, and to those who obey unrighteousness, indignation, wrath, tribulation, and

and anguish? Hath not Truth itself told them that there is a time when the righteous shall go into everlasting life, but the wicked into everlasting punishment? we need not stand to reason upon such concessions. The case is plain what we ought to do, if we have but common sense and understanding. Is it not a most contemptible and pitiable condition we are in, if we suffer our selves to perish everlastingly, because we will not take the pains of a few days to be saved? to fall into a state of meanness and misery, whence no redemption, through mere laziness or cowardice; having not the heart to encounter some difficulty, or courage to bear some present pains and pain, though it were the pulling out of an Eye or cutting off an Hand? Oh! where is the wisdom of such, who easily swim down in a pleasant stream, which runs into a dead Sea, or a lake of Fire and Brimstone? Where is their reason, who forewarned, dance on merrily with a jolly croud in a smooth way, till at last they tumble altogether into the mouth of a *Volcano*, when they were an hundred times advised, and entreated to take a certain path; at its entrance, indeed more solitary, rugged, and a little toilsome (if you please :) But which in a short time

would bring them into a place beyond all imagination delicious, furnished with the most agreeable and excellent company, eternally secure from any disturbance from within or without? Whose part is it now to wonder? are the riotous, dissolute, and vicious to wonder at the folly and weakness (as they think) of the pious, virtuous, and well-governed; or these at the willfull madness or sottishness of the former? These no doubt, if all be true that hath been said.

But some who have the greatest reason to fear, will not believe so great severity (so they term it) of Almighty God to sinners, though they are willing to believe his kindness and bounty to the good. Men can believe almost what they please, and that against the most universal Tradition, Reason, and Conscience of Mankind. But they have some reason: what's that? Sinners cannot hurt God, and do but enjoy themselves. Is this said in earnest? or is it only because they will not openly own Infidelity? But,

(1) They would hurt God Almighty if they could, and every one else; were their power answerable to their will, God himself would not be safe or happy. Every knowing and willfull Sinner, who opposeth

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seth or complies not with God's most wise and beneficial Government of the World by his Laws and Decrees, by his Commands and Appointments, hath the Insolence, and doth what he can, to make God and all the World besides, the Ministers of his Personal pleasures and lusts, and is the Enemy of God, and all that he hath made. And I think such an one deserves the severest punishment, and so doth all humane Government judge and act too. The very will and purpose alone is a tendency to such mischief; it is a partial and inchoative cause, and is accordingly to be used; of which further reasons may be still given. But,

(2.) According to this reasoning God must not reward his faithful Servants who love him; for they can as little profit God as the rebellious and malicious hurt him. If God accept the will for the deed, and reward it too, why may he not punish the will for the deed likewise? And,

(3.) I do not see, but that the Act of will is the only proper Act of a Man, and that all external effect is from God, when and in what measure he pleaseth. So that in proper speaking, a sinner hurts no body; but wills to do it. He is indeed inwardly malicious, proud, careless of every one

but himself, or gratifying his own lusts; that these have any external effect more or less, comes from another hand.

Lastly, he can hardly seem in earnest, who asks why vicious Men should be punished so severely only for enjoying themselves: Nevertheless, because we do not know how childish, trifling, and foolish Vice, may indeed render some Men, even in things of the vastest importance, we say that (to take the three capital and general ones, malice, pride, and sensuality, impiety, injustice, covetousness, and, an hundred others, being only their kinds or instruments) the malicious Man delights in mischief and would do nothing else too, if God would permit or rather lend him his power for such a purpose. The proud Man and the envious (which seems compos'd of pride and ill-nature) would have every one under his feet, and may affect superiority in every thing to such a degree, as to permit none to enjoy any good thing but himself, if his will and desires were attended by an equal power to execute them. The sensualist (who seems most intended in this excuse) if he will enlarge and indulge his carnal appetites and lusts, would command and force all that belongs to all Men to satisfy them, if he dared and could.

Nor

Nor can he generally gratifie Intemperance, luxury, and wantonness without Instruments and Comparisons, whom he makes and keeps as bad as himself; and never without the mischief of a bad example; and of all this were some *Roman* Emperors examples, as notorious, as odious, and miserable in the end.

Besides a Sensualist is unjust to God, to others, to himself; all have a right to the use of any power, which God hath endued any one withal, so far as it will go. All power is to do good to its utmost extent, like as every member of the body ('tis *St. Paul's* excellent comparison) were it endued with understanding, would be obliged to do its utmost for the greatest good of the whole; not to be in any degree useless or mischievous. The Possessor hath only the privilege to judge of Persons, Seasons, and Measures, and accordingly to distribute, God is the Master and Owner of all our faculties, abilities, enjoyments, we are but his Stewards. The Sensualist impaireth, oppresseth, or abuseth those powers and faculties, which God hath given him for his honour and service, for his own and others, especially spiritual and eternal good. He deprives himself of perfection, tranquility, happiness, a thousand of times

more than he enjoys ; and if chastisement and punishment be just for those who willfully murder or maim their Bodies, (so it may be by some mark of Infamy) or, who will idle away their time and strength, because their labour and use is lost to the publick and themselves too, why not for those who do the same to their Souls ?

The immediate reason of all reward and punishment seems to be the maintenance, encouragement, propagation, of any principle, power, or action, which is good and beneficial, and the restraint, discouragement, oppression of that which is evil and mischievous, either privatively or positively ; and such surely at least is the willfull, neglect, or omission, and consequently impairing of the use of that power any Man hath to serve God and do good withal ; much more the abuse and conversion of it to dishonour and displease God, to oppose and hinder his Service, and to do mischief with it.

The slothfull Servant was thrown into the same kind, though perhaps not the same degree of punishment, with the evil Servant. And the evil Servant too was he, who eat and drank with the drunken, as well as he who smote his Fellow Servant,
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Matth. 24. 51.
and 25. 30.

SERMON II. 73

He that did but enjoy himself, (as the phrase is) as well as he who abused others.

The reason of the Punishment of impatient Sinners, after this Life, is not their Amendment that we read in Scripture; but the manifestation of the Wisdom, Sanctity, Justice and Goodness of God, in the Government of the World, and for Confirmation and Prevention in others. For Angels and Saints shall be Spectators and Adorers of the Righteous Judgment of God, by Jesus Christ, in that great and terrible Day of the Lord.

The best reason of the everlasting Continuance of the miserable State of the Condemned, seems to be the continuance of the sinfull State of their Souls: Their inward Dispositions, and Inclinations, and Wills, being in no sort changed for the better by their Sufferings. Which we need not wonder at, since we see here such multitude of Examples, in whom afflictions and sufferings in extremity alter nothing of their inward Manners: not the loss of parts and endowments, not Ignominy, Poverty, Prisons and Gaols, not corporeal Diseases, and grievous Tortures and Pains; nay, finally, not Death it self, for heinous Crimes.

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You may hear them bitterly complain of their misfortunes, pains, unhappiness; but not a word of their sins. You shall see them wriggle and turn a Thousand ways for their Diversion, Ease, and Deliverance, but not to the humble Confession of their Sins, tho' they know as well as the Damned are like to do, that they are the Cause of their Sufferings; not to sincere Resolution of Amendment, earnest Prayers to an offended God, not only for Pardon, but for Purification of their Hearts, according to that admirable Pattern of that Pious Prince holy *David*, Ps. 51.

If it otherwise happen in this Life, as it doth sometimes, it is to be attributed to the special Operations of the Grace of God upon such Occasions. Without which, even in this present State, to him who considers things, the habitual Change of our Natures, may well seem impossible against the *Pelagians*; how much more then in the State of the Damned hereafter.

What sufficient reason *Origin* had so peremptorily to determine, that the hideous Sufferings of the Damned, would naturally force them, as it were, to Repentance, (by which, I mean, an inward Charge of the very Inclinations of the Soul, to love God, that all perfect Nature, and Goodness,

SERMON II. 75

ness, or the Sanctity and Purity of his Nature, above all other things) I know not.

And *Plato* himself, from whom it is like, he had the first notice of this *Phad.* Doctrine, doth teach, that as some wicked Men might be *ἰατροί*, capable of being restor'd to a vertuous State of Soul, by their Sufferings in the miserable State hereafter: So others there were *ἀνίατροί* incurable, and consequently, to continue there Eternally, and never to come out from that Infernal Prison.

But why *Plato* should make such a difference between the miserable there, I know not, excluding any supernatural Operation. If Sufferings naturally in some men altered their Opinions, and Inclinations of Soul, by bringing them to reflexion and consideration first, why should they not have that effect in all, sooner or later, in some time or other?

And for my part, I do not see how any man can hope for an End of Punishment there, till he can prove, that God will sometime afford his effectual Grace, for his Conversion, and the Change of his vicious and corrupt Nature. And when he can prove the one, I think, he may be assured of the other. For as God will not there any longer suffer the wicked, his Enemies,

nemies, to be as well, or better treated, than the Righteous his affectionate Servants, as they seem to be here in outward Respects: So will he never keep a good Man in such a bad place and company.

Perhaps some part of this Discourse may seem too long a Diverſion; but a little ſpice of Sceptiſm or Infidelity from a ſculking Objection, is ſo apt to abate or defeat the force of all Arguments, and Perſuaſions to be good, that I was not unwilling to mention it, (for I am not the maker of it) and at the ſame time ſufficiently to ſatisfy it, as I hope I have done. Though more amply and particularly to prove many of theſe things, will require more time and words, than is meet to be ſpent in this Preſence. And let this be then the third Answer, to the beſt Plea of the wonderer at the good, and the juſtifier of bad Men and Manners.

The Answer in few words is this, That ſuppoſing the whole Courſe of a conſcientious and vertuous Life, to be very painful and grievous, which is falſe; yet it is a folly and madneſs which deſerves the greateſt wonder and pity, for the avoiding of that, to loſe an everlaſting Happineſs, and to plunge our ſelves into an eternal Miſery, which is not Talk only, but Truth
and

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and Justice, if there be any God or Providence in the World.

To a man of a comprehensive Reason, Justice and Generosity, may be added further, and beyond all the rest. A

4. Answer, which I must not now insist upon; but only in very few words, say. To please, serve, and honour God by love and obedience, to contribute what we can to the common Good and Happiness, by all vertuous Life and Actions (Vice is useless or mischievous, a common Nuyfance) is certainly a Duty and an Obligation, which no Difficulty, Pains or Suffering in this Life, can discharge us from.

I do not understand how all our Duty is derived from our own Interest, although, I know they are inseparable. To serve and please God, and to do good to others, meerly for our own sakes, and to refuse to undergo any thing for theirs, when necessary, seems neither ingenuous nor reasonable. And I am sure it seem'd so to that great Heathen, *Tully*. As if such things, or rather nothings as we, were more to be consider'd than the Infinite God, and all the World besides; when we may as well weigh a single *Atome* against the Universe. Nor seems there any difference between a good
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and bad Man, in respect of their Will, but only of their Understanding, if both of them make themselves their entire ultimate End. The one takes the right course to be happy, the other the Wrong: But this last is mistaken only, and would have done as the first, if he had known better. And even the Man of Courage and Generosity, would take it for a great Reproach to be told, that he fights only for a little Wages or Honour either, and would not venture upon a Wound or Death it self, to save his Prince, and Countrey, and to repress an insolent and malicious Enemy, who pleaseth himself in the Destruction of all Mankind, to gratifie his boundless Lusts. Which with many other Instances is an Argument, that the Soul of Man at present, is not incapable of so great and noble a Quality. I am sure our divine Religion hath taught us as much, both by Precept and Example, when it commands us to love God above all things, and our Neighbour as our selves. Nor do I see reason to find a Figure in the known Expressions of *Moses*, and *St. Paul*. To such a Greatness of Soul we ought to aspire.

Notwithstanding we are to know, which may be proved even to a Demonstration from the Nature of God, and of the Soul, that

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that our Duty and Interest, our perfection of Nature and Happiness of Life are inseparable, except for a Moment or two in this Life, for Exercise and Improvement of Vertue or other Ends, which vanisheth into nothing compar'd with Eternal Duration.

It is impossible that the wicked should be happy or not miserable, and that the vertuous and good should be miserable or not happy. As impossible as that there should be no God at all : or that God should not be infinitely powerfull, wise and good, and consequently distributively just.

And now, I have said all I have at present, in Answer to the wonderers, and their best reason for vicious Manners, Practices, Customs and Examples ; and perhaps the general Heads of all that can be said, and what I think cannot be answered again, by those who will act like Men, and be governed by Truth and Reason.

But as for those who disclaim or burlesque their own most excellent Nature, and will abandon themselves to blind and haughty Self-will, Humours, Lusts, and Passions ; who will be like the Horse or Mule, that wanteth understanding ; I leave them to other Arts and Methods of Persuasion, and to the Mercy of God Almighty,
which

which we will not confine. All that can be done for them on our parts, is to pity and pray for them, as we do daily, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done*, That God may at last rule over, and in the Hearts of all the Sons of Men. He can when he pleaseth work most effectually upon the Souls of the most senseless and obdurate Sinners; even upon those who scorn all Instruction as a mean, and hate understanding as a troublesome thing; even upon those who most foolishly take it for a Point of Wisdom, and Greatness of Heart, to make a Mock at Sin; even upon those finally, who with the Heathen Idolaters in the Text, think it strange that all Men run not with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of them because they will not.

SERMON III.

PSAL. XXXII. 5.

*I said, I will confess my Transgression unto
the Lord.*

I Am a-while to treat of a Duty of Religion, both revealed, and, as I think, natural, which perhaps passeth among the wise and brave of this World, for a weak and mean thing, and an effect of superstition rather than Religion: But to me it seems just contrary, so qualified and directed, as shall presently be mentioned. Confession of Sin to Almighty God, hath very evident Arguments of many excellent Qualities.

For, is it not a sign of a just Honour for God, and all his Laws made known, by Reason or Revelation? Is it not a Mark of a generous Love of the Truth, and that a Man will own his Faults and Follies, tho' to his present Disadvantage, and that he is

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more ashamed to commit a Sin than confess it? Is it not a proof of great probity and strength of mind, for a man not only to permit, but command his Conscience (and others too if there be occasion) to report to him all the Truth, and nothing but the Truth concerning himself; to set all his Faults and Infirmities before him, and not to conceal, excuse, or justify any, because he is not willing to mend any, or hath no concern for the Health and Ornament of his Nature? Are not these, and such like Qualities, highly laudable? On the contrary, are not a vulgar Carelessness and Insensibility of our Manners and Actions, vain, self-conceit, arrogance, affectation of appearing to ones self, and others, something worthy, rather than being so indeed; and above all, the contempt of the Word, and Commandments of Omnipotent Goodness, Wisdom and Sanctity, by a weak, ignorant and sinfull Creature; I say, are not these sordid and truly contemptible?

Nor doth this confession of sin to the Supreme Deity seem to me less a part of natural Religion, than Prayers and Praises to him; though we have little mention of it among the Heathen Moralists.

And

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And as this is Truth in it self, so we find that the greatest Souls who have had the Knowledge of the true God, have always behaved themselves with Truth and Decency towards him; acknowledged their Sins, thrown themselves at his Feet, and humbly implored his Pardon and Grace. Nor was there ever recorded a more eminent Example of this than *David*, as great a Prince as Saint.

He wanted not surely that Courage which is so magnified and adored by the World, who when scarce got out of his Childhood, killed the Lion and the Bear; and, when a Stripling armed only with a Sling, ventured upon the prodigious Bulk of a Giant, a Man of War from his Youth, and laid him dead at his Feet, and returned to the Camp, lugging his Head, the Trophée of his Victory; who from a simple Swain was advanced to the Alliance, and then Possession of a Throne for his Prowess and Wisdom. And yet, lo this is the Man who cries out (Psalm 51.) *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out all my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned, &c.* This is the

man who, in this *Pſalm*, proclaimeth the Blessedness of the Innocent, or the Pardoned, and telleth us, *That while he kept silence his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long*; This is he, finally, who in the Verse of the Text, acknowledged his sins unto God; who said and did accordingly, *That he would confess his transgressions unto the Lord.*

And because it is, and ought to be a daily Religious Duty enjoined, and recommended in our publick and private Devotion and Worship, it ought also, more especially, to be well understood, prudently directed, and shewn to be most agreeable to natural Reason and Justice, as well as expressly commanded and constantly practised by good Men in the Holy Scripture.

Accordingly, we shall chuse out three things for the Heads of our Discourse concerning it. *First*, the Nature and Parts of it: *Secondly*, the Rules for it: *Thirdly*, the Reasons of it.

1. And very briefly, in a more solemn and deliberate Confession of Sin, especially (and it is best to take into its signification more than one single Act) three parts may be observed, and that in this Order.

1. Self-

1. Self-accusation: The Penitent having first enquired into his past Temper and Behaviour, consulted his Conscience concerning his Duty, and observed his Aberrations from the Rules of it : He proceeds as a Person different from himself, to accuse and bring an Endictment against himself, and here he acts like a Plaintiff.

2. But *Secondly*, Follows an ingenuous and free Acknowledgment of the Truth, of what with the greatest Impartiality he judgeth to have been bad in him, or ill done by him. Neither by Superstition or Timidity vainly frightening, nor by Boldness or Partiality favouring himself. Here he acts the part of a guilty Defendant, and an upright Witness against himself.

3. *Thirdly*, He pronounceth himself guilty and deserving of the Punishment, which God hath threatned for the Transgression of his just Laws. And so he leaves himself to God, whether he will execute the Sentence, and punish him as he deserves, or else be pleased upon his humble Confession, and other parts of a compleat Repentance, to shew him mercy, reprieve and forgive him.

Thus the true Penitent in this part of Repentance termed Confession, acts as a Prosecutor, guilty Defendant and Witness, and an inferior Judge.

In such manner may be, in short, distinctly conceived the Nature and Parts of Confession.

2^{ly}, The Rules follow. Some of which may be these;

1. Let our Confession be made with exact Truth. We are at no time and with no Person to say, that which is not true: Least of all, when we address our selves to God. This fault can only be on one side, *viz.* by confessing those things to be sinful in us, which are not so, or to deserve a greater Punishment than they truly do. For if we falsely think any thing really sinful in us, not to be so, we do not confess that at all. The number and evil Deserts of our Sins, are truly great enough in themselves; we need not to multiply or magnifie them in our Confession by imagination and passion. As those (for example) have always seemed to me to do, who in their Prayers acknowledge all their Actions, before their Conversion to be sins, *i. e.* before Grace was generally the ruling Principle in their Hearts, or their lives were governed by their Consciences. For a bad man generally speaking, may now and then drop a good Action.

Nay there are those who have been so humble (which is excellent when it speaks truth,

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truth, and not despicable even when it is mistaken, if sincere) in their Confession, as to say, That all the very best Actions of the best Men, after their Conversion are sins too, but pardoned in Christ, which I do not well understand.

Defective indeed they may be (and so is the most perfect love to God in the highest Angel ; for no Creature can honour and love him in that degree which he deserves) defective I say they must needs be, but not sins. He who loves God with all his might, strength, and understanding, as I doubt not hath been done often by pious Souls, surely sins not, nor need ask any pardon for it, though he may justly acknowledge, that the greatest affection our hearts are capable of to him, are infinitely below the infinite Excellency of his Nature. The Confession of the neglect of a more than Jewish Observation of the Sabbath, in some men's Phrase is upon this account blameable : but such an Observation of the Lord's Day, and other Festivals, as is prescribed by the Church of *England*, in one of their pious and grave Canons, is most agreeable to Christian Piety and Prudence, and the general willfull neglect of it, more than favours of Prophaneness. There are other strange things

too, which in the depth of a seeming or mistaken humility have been uttered, especially in some men's *ex tempore* Confession, without countenance from Scripture rightly interpreted, and shocking the common Reason of Mankind. Numerous also are the Instances of this Errour among the *Romanists*, who out of ignorance or design, unreasonably, oft-times rack and vex men's Consciences. But these things, need not to be too subtilly searched into. It is too much, that the best of us have too many, and too great faults to confess to Almighty God.

The most usual Causes of this Fault in confession is, such a degree of Self-revenge, Indignation, and Contempt against our selves, as to cause us to forget Truth and Justice to our selves, as they would ordinarily be the Causes of false Judgment on the worst side against others, whom we are apt in such Fits to accuse of much more than they are guilty of. But of this Cause (though surely it be a fault) I am almost tempted to wish we could see more.

But there is a second Cause very dangerous, and that is a Design to flatter Almighty God.

It is not impossible but, that some without reflection may conceit, that the Honour

nour they do to God, by confessing all, and more than all the sins they are guilty of, may procure a Connivance for some sins, though they never forsake them. It is enough, or very well to load themselves with the heaviest Accusation, though they do not, or perhaps think they cannot grow better. Much like a great Debtor, who will readily own greater Summs than he really owes, if for that his Creditor will permit him to run further into his Debt, and not be angry.

But the most frequent Cause of this Mis-carriage is Superstition, *i. e.* a groundless Timidity, by reason of mistake in the Nature and Degrees of Sin, which is a thing of bad consequence; when our Judgments are deceived, and our Affections abused; we may swallow that which is truly wicked, and greatly mischievous, and be frighted at that which is really so far from being evil, that it may be good and commendable. Let our confession therefore of sin be truly informed and well advised: Which is the first Direction.

2^{dly}, The second is to confess our sins most impartially. As we must not on the one side make or magnifie our Sins through Self-revenge, Flattery of Almighty God, Superstition or Timidity: So we must on
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the other hand take great care, that we do not excuse, connive at, or extenuate any. Such are our most profitable and delightfull Sins ; Those which by corrupt Nature, or evil Custom and Practice are deepest in our Hearts, and therefore most difficult and painfull to forsake: We must be in all sincerity most willing to see, acknowledge and amend what is truly faulty in our selves, and what is most so.

The Design of a true hearted Christian is to be better, and his hearty desire is to reform universally, and in order to that, he must know what is really amiss, and out of order. Like the wounded or sick Man, who longs for his Cure and Health. He is not willing to conceal or forget any of his Ailments from himself, or his Physician. So far from that, that he beseecheth his Physician's care, as well as useth his own observation to discover all, least through ignorance or neglect, something may prove fatal to him.

And what a foolish thing is it to say nothing of, or slubber over some sweet, some darling Sins we are loth to leave, when we are upon our knees before God? He needs not our confession for his information. He seeth the most secret and dark Corners of our Hearts, and knows full well
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whether we hide any thing there or no. He observes whether we deal truly or hypocritically with him, and if he find the last, will reject us and our confession too. Follow we that great Example *David*. *Cleanse me from my secret sins* (Psalm 19. 33.) prays that holy Man; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. He that thus prayed for the discovery of all his sins without reserve, no doubt in his Confession spared none.

3dly, A third Rule of our Confession is, that it be performed seriously and affectionately. The confession here meant, is not uttering a few words with our Mouths, though never so good: but it is in the mind and spirit, though we should not speak a syllable. Nor is it to be slight and careless, as if it were a thing of no great moment, whether it were true or no, and we indifferent whether it were done at all. No! It is at the same time to be expressly assented to by our Judgment, owned by our Consciences, and thence pass further into our affections. We are to be really troubled, ashamed, disordered and tremble at the mention and remembrance of our sins, according to the various Degrees and Aggravations. We are to be affected with

with them in our Devotion, when our own Conscience only can accuse us, as if men of Gravity and Authority should openly and publickly charge us. Nay (setting aside the difference which the hopes of pardon here may make) as if God himself instead of our Consciences, was judging of us. And do we think at that terrible Day, when Jesus Christ shall appear with all the Ensigns of Justice and Majesty, with Rewards and Punishments in his hands, we shall be looking another way? Shall we then stand unconcern'd, and confess our sins in such a manner, as if neither God nor our selves need take any notice of it. No, then with sinking Hearts, and trembling Knees, we shall see, believe and confess, that we are miserable Sinners indeed. And yet all in vain, because it proceeds only from the Terrour of the Sentence and Punishment just ready to be executed, not from the hatred of sin, from the dread of the Judge; not from the love of him, or hatred of our Crimes. But now in this Day of Grace, our passionate Confession and Cries from a truly penitent (that is changed) Heart to the Judge of all the World, that indeed we have presumptuously, and ungratefully offended against his holy Laws, and that he would have
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mercy upon us miserable offenders, shall through Heav'n's Goodness find a gracious Audience and Acceptance. Of such temper, and in such manner should be our confession in the third place.

4^{ly}, Our confession ought to be suitable and proportionable. I mean our confessions is to be proportionable to our sins. Thus we ought between God and our own selves, most frequently and passionately to confess those sins which are in themselves really the greatest, and which we most frequently and deliberately commit. To be always with great vehemency, filling our Prayers with smaller Faults (though none are to be slighted and indulged, for small sins known, weaken conscience and make way for greater) but more rarely or faintly to mention those sins, which are truly more provoking, is to offend against this Rule.

Thus to confess impertinent and wandering Thoughts in Religious Duties, vain use of God's Name (though these things are by no means to be allowed or neglected) but never to say any thing of Pride, Covetousness, Injustice, Fraud, Hypocrisy, Malice, or the like, or so coldly as if we scarce thought them any sins ; I say, this is to perform this Duty with great indiscretion

discretion if not Hypocrisie. For it is a shrewd sign we can be very favourable to sin, when it is agreeable or profitable, and therefore painfull to subdue and mortifie it. When we are clamorous against the sins we get little by, or which cost us little of expence, or pains to forsake: but otherwise silent or soft; it is very suspicious that there is not in us that hearty Zeal against sin, which we would seem to be possessed withall.

5ly, And *lastly*, Our confession will be the more commendable if it be voluntary, and from pious Motions in our heart allowed by our judgments, when we freely open and disclose our Souls to God, and earnestly desire witness, and judge God and our Consciences to inform and remember us of our Faults. As may be more especially done at those times which are set a-part for a longer and more deliberate performance of this Religious Duty.

This is better surely than when our confession is thrust upon us by a persecuting guilty Conscience, which we fly from as much as we can; or when it is extorted from us by the urging Interrogatories, or undeniable Proofs of our Friends or Enemies, and then uttered with coldness and indifference.

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Such are some of the Directions or Rules for our Confession, which was the second general Head.

3^dy, The third is some good for the frequent performance of this Duty of Religion. They are many.

1. *First*, By a serious affectionate and impartial Confession of our sins, we give God and his Laws their just Honour. At the same time we acknowledge and bewail our evil doings, in sinning against God and transgressing his Laws, we proclaim the Righteousness of both; nay the Justice of our Punishment which God hath, or may inflict upon us. When we accuse, confess, condemn our selves, we justify God in his Nature, Commands and Dealings towards us, when we seriously cry guilty, confess what we have done and deserve, we at the same time declare that God's Nature is holy, his Precepts right, and all his Dealings with his Creatures just and unblameable. Like that great Example of Penitents, Psalm 51. *Against thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mayst be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.*

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2^{ly}, This confession of sin is very edifying to others, both good and bad, when it is performed publickly or with others, and owned our Duty in secret too. We hereby do somewhat considerable towards the Confirmation of the good, and Reformation of the bad. The mischief we have been the Authors of by our naughty Example, we undo again in part by a free and serious Confession; we thereby tell the World it was not our discretion, or commendation to have lived, and done as we have done formerly. No! 'twas our folly and shame. We call now to them not to follow us, or if they have adventured after us, to retreat presently. If they have imitated us in sinning, they would do it now in confessing, and condemning themselves.

4^{ly}, This confession of sin is very acceptable to good Men; nay, I may say, generally to bad Men too, who have some kindness and good liking for Vertue and Piety: but are so entangled and captivated in vicious Courses, that they cannot find in their heart to take the pains to leave them. The conversion of a sinner, of which free and humble Confession is a fair step and a great mark, is certainly the joy of Angels and Saints. Nothing more melting, than the hearty and unaffected Confession

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feſſion of a Penitent ſinner. It is a ſign of ſo many amiable Qualities, (as ſincere Piety, Humility, &c.) that a good Man cannot obſerve it without joy, and even a bad Man without ſome motion and tenderneſs. It is a more than ordinary pleaſure, to hear a pious Soul ſighing out his confeſſion of his ſins, and deſires of grace, and pardon before God, when he thinks no body hears, or is regardless whether they do or no.

ſly, This confeſſion of ſin is a very comfortable Duty to us. What calmneſs, eaſe, and ſecret comfort is diffuſed through the Soul of a devout Man, after he hath opened and diſburthened himſelf by a ſincere and humble Confeſſion to Almighty God? His conſcience ſoftly tells him, that he hath not in vain diſcloſed his heart; that he hath not confeſſed his faults to the deaf Ear of too rigid a Maſter, or ſevere Father; that God as great, and as high as he is, regards the Soul in ſuch a poſture with great kindneſs and compaſſion; and that now the offender may ſafely put himſelf into his hands. If in our Confeſſion we are conſcious to our ſelves, of no Hypocriſie or Formality, it creates an humble confidence in God, with a free reſignation and ſubmiſſion of our ſelves to

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him, notwithstanding our former sins, and contracted guilt. Nor is this confidence vain. For so far as our confession is a sign and exercise of real Goodness and Piety in us, it doth render us more capable of his Favour, and truly acceptable to him.

6ly, Confession of our sins, such as I have directed, is a Duty of Devotion of great benefit to us, and that many ways. As,

1. It is a certain and notable means for preserving us in that Degree of Holiness and Goodness we may have attained to, and of making further progress therein continually.

For as it brings to remembrance our former known sins (nor are we only to confess new sins, but old ones, and the same very often, especially if more heinous, nor even to forget them to our lives end) so it discovers to us many before unknown. Before especially a more deliberate Confession, we are to reflect upon, and examine our selves carefully, and that will hardly be done without some further knowledge and discovery of our faults, and (which is of great use) of their temptations and occasions. And even in the times themselves of our devout Confession, usually the temper of our minds is such,

such, that some sins then may first appear, which before we had never observed or suspected. Now all this is necessary for our amendment, and the prevention of the like again. For how shall we avoid that, which we never knew or have forgot. Add to this that every serious and hearty (not customary) Confession, impresseth upon us some more dislike and aversion from the sins confessed. Inasmuch, that by the frequent practice of it, we may at last become utterly ashamed to confess our sins so often, but not to forsake them; to sin on in a round, perpetually committing and confessing the same sins by turns. Our consciences will be apt so to reproach, that we shall leave off either to commit or confess. Thus as an hearty and unconstrained Confession is a sign and effect of an ingenuous and generous Dislike and Hatred of sin, so doth it confirm, heighten and increase it.

2. Another benefit and advantage of this Religious Duty, is a right Understanding, a true and just Opinion of our selves; to know what is bad and defective in our selves, as well as what is good and usefull. This is one principal Branch of that most excellent Grace *humility*, which containeth many other. The great Error of the

World is on that hand, to be arrogant and presumptuous. Foolish Self-love renders us willfully blind, so as to see no faults, spy no defects, observe no sins in our selves. We deny all, or excuse all, or justify all.

We all know the Behaviours of the Pharisee, and the Publican in their Devotion (*Luke 18. 9.*) They both went up into the Temple to pray. The Pharisees Prayer was so far from any confession, that it was all boasting *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, &c.* The Publicans contrary, was all Confession, Shame, Sorrow, begging for Mercy. He stands a far off with a dejected Countenance: He with a revengefull hand beats his Breast, and sighs out, *O Lord, be mercifull to me a sinner.* Our Saviour tells us what was the effect. *I tell you this man went down rather justified than the other.* As the Pharisees Self-conceit and Arrogance, made him pray in such a manner as he did, so his Prayer made him more arrogant still: It could not but increase his presumptuous Opinion of himself, to reckon up, and that before God himself, all his Religious Qualities and Actions without taking notice of but one small fault, and to have compared himself with one so despicable in his Eyes,

Eyes, as the poor Publican. It is reasonable to believe, he went away bigger and statelier from his Prayers, than he came to them. On the contrary, as the Publican's Behaviour, Posture and Prayer proceeded, no doubt, from a due Sense of his sin and guilt, and consequent humility: So did it likewise dismiss and send him away with a greater Degree of it. He saw that before in himself, which made him cry out with shame and indignation against himself, *Lord, be mercifull to me a sinner.*

And doubtless he saw it yet more, and with deeper impression upon his heart, for having made his short but most passionate Confession.

4. This confession of sin makes us less censorious and contemptuous of others, more backward to publish their Faults or to insult over them. We shall not be so ready to censure, talk of, despise others, when we are accustomed to look upon, and justly and humbly to acknowledge what is as bad or worse, at least bad enough in our selves. We are not so forward to reproach others, when we permit our own Consciences to reproach our selves. We are loth to condemn, at least to treat others with Wrath and Contempt; when if we

are impartial, we see too much cause to do the like by our selves. No man so ready to proclaim and aggravate other men's Faults, as those who take the least notice of their own. He who knows his own defects and miscarriages as he pities himself, so is he apt to do to others. Most men esteem and despise others comparatively, or as they judge them superior or inferior to themselves in worthy, and deserving Qualities and Performances. We take the Measures of others from our selves. Now he that observes most Infirmities and Faults in himself, will think himself less above or more under Men, than he who though ignorance or self-conceit, sees no blemish nor blame in himself.

The former often despiseth himself comparatively with others; the latter foolishly despiseth every one besides himself. In the Example just now alledged how haughtily doth the Pharisee hold up his Head, and with what Contempt doth he throw his Eye upon the Publican? *This Publican*, saith he: But we hear no such Language from the Publican, who in truth had more reason to have derided the Ignorant and Hypocritical Pharisee.

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54, And *lastly*, This confession makes us more sensible of the Divine goodness, and disposeth us to greater Gratitude and Love to God. The Divine goodness may well be our wonder. That the infinite Majesty so provoked, hath not yet made us remarkable Examples of his Justice and Displeasure; Nay, that he hath continued to us Life, Health, Strength, Plenty, Power, and the like Favours, which we ungrateful Wretches have dishonoured him with. His lenity and long suffering cannot but be admired by us, when we consider that we have grown wanton and proud against him by his own benefits; and his bounteous Goodness which should have highly obliged us, hath made us careless and presumptuous, as if we now wanted him no more, and could stand upon our own Legs. But that which may justly increase our wonder is, that after all this upon our humble confession and actual Change of our Behaviour towards him, he is ready to forgive our greatest Crimes, and to blot out all our Transgressions. So great is his goodness, that he is more ready to give us his pardon upon such a Repentance, than we are to ask it, or by Repentance to render our selves capable of it; as if he courted our Friendship, and stood in need of our

Reconciliation. Finally, there is something yet more which exceeds wonder, and that is, that God should be pleased so kindly to accept our late Repentance and Obedience, as to take occasion from thence to bestow upon us, no less than Eternal life. Now the serious and deliberate Confession of our sins, giving us a necessary occasion to observe, and consider all this; so certainly the Truth; cannot but deeply affect us with Gratitude and Love, to the Authour of such unparallel'd Goodness and Love, expressing it self by all ways possible, our Words, Services, whole Lives. Of so great and much greater spiritual benefit and profit, is a true, sincere, serious, affectionate and free Confession of our sins to Almighty God. Which was the fifth Reason for the performance, and frequent Exercise of it.

And now, if we put all these Arguments together; the just Honour we owe to God and his Laws, the Edification and Pleasure of others, our own spiritual Comfort and great Benefit, one would think they should be sufficient to reasonable Men, guided in their opinion and actions by good understanding, though we had no Commands from revealed Religion, not only to secure this Duty of Religion and Piety from contempt

tempt or neglect: but especially to recommend it to their frequent and serious Practice from the highest to the lowest.

For no mortal so high, whom it doth not exceedingly become, and perhaps better than the meanest. For excellent and great Qualities sit best upon the greatest, are most amiable in them, and most justly expected from them. And true Religion, the right Knowledge, reasonable Worship, and Resemblance, and Imitation of the Supreme Being, and the Universal Parent, is the utmost Perfection and Attainment of humane Nature. Nor is there any in this Life so holy and innocent (take all our Lives together) who have not great cause for, and abundant need of this confession of sin.

Thrones and Shrines, Crowns and Glories, Sovereigns and Saints are with all just Humility to lie at the Foot-stool of the Almighty, and most mercifull Father of his Creatures; we may altogether send up with one Heart and Voice, our common Cries of Confession of Guilt, and Petition for Pardon, without fear of offending against the Dignity of our Condition, or Sanctity of our Profession. None too great, none too good, to say with this great and good Prince;

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I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgression to the Lord, that he might forgive the iniquity of my sin.

For a conclusion of this Discourse, it may not be amiss to pick out of it, and put together a brief Representation of a true penitent Confessour, in some such manner as follows.

The sincere and deliberate Penitent then is no negligent Person of himself, to let all things go at random, but is desirous to bring things to a Trial, and to keep them in order in the Affairs of his Soul; nor is he slothfull or afraid to take notice of, and bring an Indictment against the Offender, though it be himself, when he thinks he hath been guilty, he will bring his Accusation, and let him answer for himself as well as he can. Nor doth he after this endeavour to withdraw himself, not to appear to his Action or Indictment, but to sculk, lie hid, or have the business passed over: nor doth he when his carriage comes to be canvassed, alledge Pretences, make frivolous Apologies, shift and turn himself any way to excuse and defend himself, or to abate and extenuate what he cannot deny. No: but he willingly makes his appearance,

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pearance, desires nothing more than that the Truth may be known, and all that can be said against him may be produced; that either he may where he justly can vindicate, or where he cannot condemn himself, were he is convinc'd of his Faults or Crimes, though never so heinous, he owns it, he cries guilty to God; saying, O Lord! I have indeed transgressed thy Commandments, I have done foolishly, I have been wicked, ungratefull, wilfully ignorant, or careless, or presumptuous; I confess it; I am perfectly ashamed of my self, I despise and abhor my self; what shall I say unto thee, O thou great Maker, and Preserver, and Benefactor of Men? I am obnoxious to thy greatest Severity and Justice, I deserve to be punished as thy unerring Wisdom thinketh most fit, I submit my self to thy Sentence, and receive and own it, whatsoever it shall be as the most just. But I hope that Justice may be mixed and allayed with Mercy, and that that Goodness which hath some way thus far led me to true Repentance, will go on so far to compleat it in me, as to render me capable of thy pardon and forgiveness. Nor is this Confession forced from this confessing Penitent, nor wrung out of him, nor thrust upon him by his persecuting con-

conscience, which he flies as much as he can, nor extorted by the urging Interrogatories of his Friends or Enemies, with a great coldness and unwillingness. No, it is the most free and voluntary; he himself discloseth and openeth all his Heart, and whatever he knows by himself, and earnestly desires both witness and judge too, to produce all his faults, and to tell him what he may be ignorant of, or hath forgotten. He is not willing to connive at any in himself, though never so criminal and shamefull, nor doth he desire any to conceal them from him; he hath no darling which he would not look upon, because he would not leave; or wink hard, because he would not see it, or believe it to be no sin, or so small, that it deserves not the trouble of any notice or acknowledgment. He drags out his most beloved, and his most justly suspected sins, and is not ashamed to betray them, which he hath so perniciously hugged, and which have and would betray him by their Flatteries, Insinuations and Charms to his utter Ruin and Destruction. He prudently hath his Eye there where there is the greatest danger, and his greatest, most delightful and most frequent Sins he will bring to the light, and so often till he makes almost

most the sins themselves to blush, and perfectly wonders at his own blindness and stupidity. 'Tis not a few words only that this man mumbles over, or a Repetition of any Form, as it were of Recantation with his Lips, when he is insensible, or perhaps laughs at it in his heart; no, it is within in his Soul: judgment and conscience, and affections; all within him is employed and moved. He is no Hypocrite or Actor of a part, but oft-times appears rather on the other hand to have no such thing, or to be of no such temper when he is. None can tell perhaps whether he hath been in his Closet, or what he hath been doing there. Nevertheless he doth not refuse if there be just occasion (as in publick Devotion) to let all the World know, both by his words and carriage, what he thinks of himself, generously to justify God and his most righteous Laws and Dispensations; but to accuse, reproach and condemn himself. To advise and admonish all men, that they beware of what he seeth his Folly in, and not to imitate his past bad Example. He is willing that good men should understand, they have one come over to their party, and that bad men should follow him. He is very glad to please good men with such a sight,
and

had even to add to the Joy of Angels. He soon spies the great benefits of this devout Exercise, and is very sensible of the pleasure and comfort of it. He now discovers more pravity, disorder, and sin, and more aggravations of them than he did, and consequently according to his earnest desire, can better prevent or amend them: he understands himself infinitely better than he did, and sees great reason for humility, charity, pity and compassion to offenders; but not for an indifferency and neglect of the properest way he can use to reform them. As he is grave and serious, and hath a very indifferent and mean, and sometimes contemptuous opinion of himself; so is he for that very reason again cheerful and gay, for that nothing is more so, than innocence or repentance. He makes his address to God Almighty as with great humility and modesty, so with great good hopes for success in his requests, or for that which is better. He makes use of God upon all occasions, and in all concerns; as his refuge, his shelter, his support, his supply, his patron, protectour, benefactor; nay, his Father; casting all his cares upon him with moderate industry and endeavour, but without solicitude and vexation.

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In fine, Though he have grievously and unworthily for the time past offended and displeased God, yet he is not afraid of him, but assured of his pardon, love and favour for Christ's Sake, because he is well assured of his Repentance; and because that God cannot lye, who hath said, *That he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy.*

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SERMON IV.

PSALM XIV. 1.

The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God: They are corrupt, &c.

AN Argument of late especially, often treated of, and perhaps in this great Audience, and truly for great reason. • It may be hoped there is less need of it now ; I am sure there are great hopes that there will be ; when simplicity, probity, and piety have more seasoned the first sources of manners and opinions. However, I doubt there may be some need of it still : The God whom the wicked Fool denies, only knows when it will be otherwise. Good men would rejoyce to see the time (and it may come) when it shall be as ridiculous to doubt of the Being, Attributes and Providence of the true God, as it is of the Sun's Being in Heaven, and its influences upon this Earth ; as in-
† deed

deed it now is too in it self, and to an honest man's thinking in a right method.

But let us briefly run over the words, read, and see what instruction they will afford us to discourse upon. By the term *Fool* it is well known, that in the Scripture generally is not meant only an ignorant or erroneous Person, but also one who is wicked and of ill-manners, because he knows not, or mistakes his own interest, as well as departs from his Duty. The Hebrew word is here, נבל which signifies him that doth foul, as well as foolish Actions. So *Nabal* is said to have done according to his Name, when he was so ungratetull and churlish to *David*, as well as so foolish and imprudent; that had it not been for *Abigail*, by sparing a little he had lost all, 1 Sam. 25. 25. And the Syriack Version here renders the Hebrew word, נבל by ܐܢܝܢ *i. e.* an unjust, wicked and perverse Man.

2. It follows, *hath said in his heart*, *i. e.* he hath thought so, though perhaps he never dared to say so; for that was Blasphemy, and therefore death by the Jewish Law.

3. There is no God, *i. e.* there is no such thing really existent; 'tis but a name
or

or an imagination. Or if he be any where yet he is not present upon this Earth; he meddles not with humane Affairs. Some foolish, wicked Men, in their thoughts, deny either the Being, or the Providence of God, extending it self to this lower World. Like the Ancient Sect of the *Epicureans*, among the Greeks, long after these Fools of the Psalmist; and consequently the true and necessary Perfections and Attributes of his Nature, his Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, his Universal Goodness (whereby he governs and directs the whole Universe at once) to the best Ends, his Sanctity, Justice, and the like. And further consequent to this, they deny all distinction between Moral good and evil, right and wrong, vertue and vice, other than the present gratification, and fulfilling their own lusts of haughtiness, pride, violence, covetousness, voluptuousness, &c. which sort of Men the Psalmist here more particularly means by the Fool. Nay, finally; hence it must necessarily follow that they were, כופרים בתורה as the Jews speak, *i. e.* they denied their Religion, despised even the Authority and Laws of *Moses*, and were Judaical Infidels, as ours now-days are Christian ones; which is the more usual signification of the word, and re-

strained to revealed Truths. This last sense wants not Equal probability with the former. For it is likely, that from the beginning of Mankind, there have been many more, who have question'd the Providence and true Attributes, than the Existence of a God, for want of the true notion of his Nature, and therefore the *Chaldee Paraphrase* seems not to have done amiss, when it paraphraseth לית שלטנא דאלהא בארעא *the fool hath said in his heart* that God hath no Dominion or Government in the Earth.

4. The words, *they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, &c.* may be looked upon with the coherence, either of a cause or an effect of the preceding Proposition. *The fool hath said in his heart, &c.* As if they should be thus uttered. Because they are corrupt, &c. therefore they have proceeded to that extremity of folly and impudence, as to think there is no God at all, and that he doth not see and know what they do; or if he doth, yet he cannot or will not concern himself to punish them. Or we may read then to this sense: Foolish and lewd Men have first perswaded themselves that there is no God, or no Providence which reacheth humane Affairs, and then have let loose the Reigns to their lusts,

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lusts, which have carried them to the most wicked Works, and abominable Practices.

From whence me may learn these Two things.

1. That they who deny the Being or Providence of God over Mankind, and the consequent Truths mentioned, are both ignorant and wicked; or infidelity is the quality of vicious Fools. *The fool, &c.*

2. That the denying of those great Truths, and such like, is the cause of corrupt manners; or infidelity is followed with still greater corruption of manners, and wickedness of practice.

To take the first of these.

Among many heads of Discourse, which have and may be handled, in this great and most important Argument, I shall choose but these Two.

1st. To observe some of the most frequent causes of this Disease. And,

2^{ly}. To propose some remedies to prevent or suppress their Efficacy.

And because those of both parts are many to be named, I shall be as brief as I can in each of them; and do little more than enumerate them.

1st. The first cause then of this infidelity is ignorance. A charge which perhaps they may wonder or smile at, who have so often been by themselves, and others taken for more than ordinary Wits; and so indeed they are, but 'tis in levity, shallowness, temerity, self-conceit and boldness, and some other as worthy qualities to be mentioned. And we affirm still, that one of the leading and first Causes of infidelity is great ignorance of the Nature of all Beings, short of infinite Perfection, and particularly of the material or corporeal World, to believe it possible for any thing to exist without a God, or a Being, whose Essence is to be infinitely perfect, and consequently necessarily to exist himself, and to be the productive and conservative Cause of all other things whatsoever existent: And then when there is such a Being, it is to have lost the faculty of reasoning, seriously to deny those Attributes of his Nature before mentioned, and his Universal Providence. For it would be to ungod him again. It must be from a gross ignorance more particularly, for any man to doubt his Universal Goodness, whereby he disposeth and ordereth all things for the best State of the Universe of Beings, in all its duration taken together,

ther, and consequently his Justice; so that it shall be better with the Good and Righteous, than with the Evil and Wicked, all Conditions or their whole Duration considered and comprehended.

It is from no better Cause, that any man questions the Immortality of humane Souls in their own Nature, and the unsuitableness of the Divine Attributes to annihilate them. And it is far more incredible, and further from all belief, that God should make our Souls *only* for this point of time we live upon this Earth, than that he should make all humane Race to come into this World only to cry and die.

'Tis (I say it again) from a contemptible ignorance of the Nature of Body and Spirit, the Nature of God, the true Ends of all Being, Life and Action, that these grand and fundamental Verities are seriously, and *ex animo*, disputed or denied by any. It would be at present too tedious and impertinent to deduce at large, the particular proofs of these most important Truths. It hath been especially, in this last Age, excellently well performed; to which in some things a further Addition may be made. Let Infidels or Scepticks sufficiently answer that first: I think we may without vanity, challenge all the power

and force of their Wit and Learning to do its utmost. Let us see if they be in earnest, whether they be not extremely ignorant, and (if we may have the leave or pardon of this Royal Audience, to provoke them with a great, but just reproach) whether they be not both bold and blockish : Of which the second Cause of infidelity will give some Account.

2^{ly}, And that is the difficulty of apprehending and conceiving those intellectual Objects, which are absolute. Such as are the Properties and Actions of God, Angels, humane Souls, whence some have concluded them to be mere Words and Talk, or mistaken for some corporeal Nature. Such are those, who first beginning at the substantiality and immortality of the Soul, proceed to deny the Providence, the Attributes, and at last the very Being of God; impudently affirming, nothing can be conceived by us but Body, and that which belongs to it. This miserable Infirmary of humane Nature, confines the noble Soul of Man, to the most ignoble and dead part of the Universe, deprives it of its greatest pleasure and perfection, and debaseth it both in its knowledge and manners, in its perceptive and active Powers. The men who are most liable to it, are those

those of much secular Business and Employment, perpetually taken up with observation and reasoning, and plodding about sensible objects and affairs of this bodily Life.

And some there are running so far to the extreme of this side, as to give little, either encouragement or opportunity to any other knowledge or employment of the mind of man, besides Mechanicks Trade and civil Justice, as if all other things were mere Chymera's, and unprofitable, fruitless, empty Notions, and nothing deserved our regard, but only how to handle a Tool well, or to buy and sell, or at the highest to prevent or decide a Controversie about an House, Field, or Fence, and other little Properties. Which indeed are at present necessary, and of great use for Temporal plenty and peace; but are not in the least to be compared to the goods of the Spirit, and to the hopes, acquisition and enjoyments of immortality in the Heavens.

Alas, how little do such men understand or consider, that if all the furniture of this momentary bodily Life be not designed by God, and used by us for spiritual and eternal good things, it is scarce worth our coming into Being at all, much less

less undergoing the manifold uneasinesses, incommodities, cares and calamities of it. The effects of this humour and genius in a Nation, to which lapsed and degenerate Mankind are prone enough, for some small time prevailing, seems to be profound ignorance and oblivion of intellectual and heavenly things, the increase of Atheism, irreligion and prophaneness, Immorality in heart and life, any further than it is inconsistent with secular interest, and restrained by the Laws of civil Society.

For which one reason, it seems highly expedient, or rather absolutely necessary, to set a-part one order of men, in considerable number with places, and other proper and convenient Circumstances, to preserve and improve the knowledge and esteem of spiritual and heavenly things amongst Men, otherwise truly in great danger to be lost : And without which we should live like the Fish and Mole, as ignorant of the nature and privileges and felicity of the superior World, infinitely the vastest and noblest part of the Universe, as they are of ours.

It is more than likely some men may be content with it. But surely they will be so humane and charitable, as not to hinder, but to help those which are not.

It

It is certain that the two great differences between that part of the World which is called barbarous, and that which is civil, are intellectuality and charity ; and so far as we lose either, we return again to Barbarism.

3^dly, Another most frequent and lamentable Cause indeed of infidelity, is licentiousness. Men would live as they list, and gratifie and indulge their lusts to the full, without any fear, restraint or allay. And because their consciences are at first more or less troublesome, they endeavour to bribe, corrupt, and bring them over to their party ; to tell them that they may safely and honestly too, follow such courses. For that which is ordinarily believ'd (say they) and talked of vertue and vice, and difference of Actions, except only from agreeableness and present pleasure ; of God, his Sanctity and Justice, of Heaven and Hell, of Reckonings and Recompences hereafter, are but imagination and talk, or false, or at least dubious things.

These men do the Work thoroughly of debauching, and eternally ruining themselves ; they do not only hire their Consciences to be silent or stand Neuters, but to give their lusts all possible assistance and encouragement ; like some who have fought

fought desperately in a bad cause, not without conscience, but with one as bad as their cause. And here these Persons who will suffer themselves to be thus abused by their lusts, ought timely to be aware in what great danger they are, not only to deny the Lord that bought them, but also the Lord that made them with all Religion, that ever Reason and Nature hath taught; and consequently to be deny'd by them.

4. In men of an haughty spirit; that very temper of theirs is a frequent cause of infidelity, they will needs be uncontrollable by any, and not endure any bounds to their desires and enjoyments, but what they please to set themselves. It is for ordinary and low spirits, and not for such great minds as they are (so say their flatterers, and they believe them) to suffer themselves to be restrained by any Laws of Nature, Reason or Religion, or to depend upon any Being whatsoever so much, as to hope or fear from him; and therefore they will not believe there are any such things. Men who speak as big as *Pharaoh, Who is the Lord that I should obey him?* Exod. 5. 2.

Poor creatures! who though they are not a jot wiser or better, and truly comparatively very little greater, than other
meaner

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meaner Mortals ; yet they'll aspire to the Prerogative of God their Creator, to whom by reason of his essential Sanctity, immutable Justice, all comprehending Wisdom and Almighty Power, it only belongs to know no other Laws, but those of his own Nature and Will, and to court no Power superior to his own.

5ly. We may add to these a certain gayness of spirit in some men. These hate all care, attention, reflection and foresight, which contract the spirit, and causeth it to gather it self together ; and consequently they like not to hear of or believe, nay they are resolved to disbelieve every thing which may disturb the security, or confine the liberty, or darken the gayety of their minds. It is plain, if we entertain and settle in our minds the great practical Truths of revealed and natural Religion, they will oblige us to make use of some prudence and attention ; to direct our Actions by certain Rules to a certain End ; and not to leave our selves to a tumultuous boonness of spirit, and to the fortuitous tides or rushes of our appetites and passions. So it hath been said of the Ancient *Epicureans*, that their Exclusion of their Deities from humane Affairs, was recommended by them as a comfortable dogm,

dogm, freeing Men from all fear and solicitude, to please or displease them.

6ly, Sometimes in some men infidelity hath proceeded from a sowerness of mind, great displeasure conceived and fermented into an impatience against God and his Providence: Perhaps their impetuous desires have been crossed, their darling designs broken, and their jolly hopes frustrated, or their sweet enjoyments suddenly swept away from them; whence first they have entertained very hard thoughts of God and his Providence, and broken out into rude and unmannerly expressions against them. Then in revenge proceeded to wish them out of the World, and at last have thought it more easie and safe to deny them.

7ly, In others again an affectation of singularity and despising what is common, an humour of contradicting of what is ordinarily believed disposeth to infidelity: Because the generality of men do believe those great truths so often mentioned, therefore they will not. They would seem more searching, or fortunate or bold in their discoveries and opinions, than all the World besides. They would appear to know, or at least dare to say, that which the generality of Men have been ignorant of, or that which, if some few of the more
curi-

curious and inquisitive and penetrating have thought as well as themselves, yet they had not the courage to publish it. Now these men are under a far more dangerous prejudice from affectation of singularity and novelty, than the generality of men whom they usually despise are, from Antiquity, Custom and Example.

If we consider both these abstractedly, it is far safer to follow common received opinions of many Countries and Ages, especially if believed of great importance, than the new inventions of one or some few.

Though both may be false, yet if no other reasons be considered, the old is much more likely to be true than the new. And I believe it is the experience of those who impartially examine things, that generally the common and well near universally received opinion of all places, and ages (especially if thought of great consequence whether true or false) are at last found in the main part of them to be true. And it is one of the best Employments of men of great Wit, and more than ordinary sagacity and capacity, to conceive and deliver them more clearly and distinctly, and to pare off and separate some absurdities and falsehoods, which may in some tract of time

time, by passing through many unskilfull hands, have been fastned to them. But of this more will be said, when we come to the remedies of infidelity.

8. (To add no more at present) Envy against the Professors, but of Ingenuity, Philosophy and Sobriety, much more of Religion and Piety; especially, if attended with any thing of Dignity, Reputation and Revenue hath been the Cause, I doubt, in many ill-tempered and ill-living Men of this Infidelity.

Some of these at first out of this ill-humour and quality feign to themselves, and then industriously bring themselves to believe it, that the things are frivolous or false, for which Men of Learning and Religion, have been thought worthy of their Rewards of Esteem, Honour and Revenue. And what's the Cause or Reason? No other but that their Eye is evil, and they would not have them to enjoy them. They do not well abide it, to see them in possession of that, which either they would have themselves, whether deservedly or not, or at least no body else. Others again, speak meanly or disgracefully of their Doctrine, Opinion, and Profession; because they spoil the Reputation of their manner of life, and are inconsistent with that licentiousness

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tiouſneſs and liberty which they profeſs, praſtiſe and delight in. Hence it is, they give them the bad and contemptible names of Pedantries, uncertainties or falſhoods. Here we may take in another ſort of men, which are but ſervants and attendants to the former, thoſe, *viz.* who get their livelihood, and ſometimes more, by the exceſſes, contentions, quarrels, perjuries, and other wickedneſſes of the Age.

Theſe two, as far as their Wit and Intereſt will go, help on and promote the diſbelief of all ſober, vertuous and religious Principles.

Theſe and others, which may be ſtill added, are the inward Cauſes, and inherent in our ſelves, of unbelief and diſbelief, and which are moſt in our own Power, to prevent or remove.

There are alſo ſome others external and occaſional, ſuch as the Example of witty and acceptable Company; Hypocriſie in Religion both revealed and natural (ſo taken, and ſeeming at leaſt) eſpecially in the Teachers of them; when men profeſs they believe their grand Truths, but do not live in any ſort, as if they did. Which accuſation is partly falſe; for the generality of men, though they do not indeed live near up to their Faith, yet they would be

much worse without it. Partly it is to be put to another Cause, viz. heedlessness and want of application of their belief to their practice. But perhaps few things have been more an occasion of the Infidelity of some men, than the over-zealous and blind Credulity of others. Some men's believing too much, and otherwise than they ought, and yet fiercely imposing it, hath been the Cause of others believing too little, and sometimes they who have most complained of Scepticism and Infidelity, Unbelief and Disbelief (which are different things) have contributed much to it themselves.

The introducing of many Opinions of neither light or use, or very little either way, uncertain or trivial; nay, sometimes not only justly suspicious, but manifestly false, and then the imposing them under what Penalties men have in their own Power, the least of which is commonly the Censures and Reproaches of *Enemies or Indifferents in Religion, Hereticks, Atheists, Infidels*: I say, these have begotten and extremely nourished Scepticism and Infidelity, especially in this knowing and inquisitive Age, bold when they dare, lurking and doing more mischief oft-times when they dare not shew themselves, because they cannot be examined and receive their Answers.

This

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This is the infirmity of those well-meaning Men, who will have every thing believed and imposed too, which seems to them to make for the honour and reputation of their Religion, not minding what should be in the first place known, whether it be true or false.

But it is the wickedness of those who do it for their own secular interest, and care not how much Mankind be abused; so that their Domination be advanced and secured, at least they connive at it, and let it pass.

This Cause hath its effect principally among the ingenious and witty, the great and haughty, but not wise and just, who want either leisure or patience, or capacity or probity, to examine and distinguish things. They easily throw away the Wheat with the Chaff; what is true and solid, with what is false and light.

'Tis also probity of mind they want, who being licentiously given, and no great friends to any Religion or Truth either, which may lay any restraint upon them in their opinions or practices, gladly take any advantages against them.

That men look upon all professing Religion and Conscience to be Ignorant, Superstitious, or Cunning; so that their Ex-

ample or Reason are of no Authority with them. Neither doth this humour stop among this sort of men, but it is soon conveyed into the vulgar too, who soon learn to contemn Religion, and the Priest especially in times of liberty.

Wherefore it is to be advised, (and sincerely Religious men, wise and honest, who heartily desire the Advancement of true Religion will so do) that we be first assured of the truth of our belief and opinions in Religion, and be now carefull and just to appear for nothing but what is so, and for that reason. And when we cannot fairly maintain any thing to be such, tho' it appear never so much for the honour and interest of Religion (as many very false and forged things have) let it rest, and go as it is till time may further discover. And as for the vulgar, it is surely their safest way to rely upon the Conduct of such wise and honest Men, though they may be even exhorted to see with their own Eyes too if they can. For it is much more easie for them to know who are such, than to judge themselves of the truth and falsehood, Universall conveniencies and inconveniencies of things, to know who are the best Guides, than to guide themselves.

This

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This plain dealing without fraud or force, will surely much advance the just Esteem of Religion, and its Ministers, and consequently its influence and efficacy.

We have but too much proof of this Cause of Infidelity from experience. We have seen some Men, and that of the first rank, who have taught us such a God, and that out of his own Books, which others judge to be an absolute impossibility: And yet after all, they will be the only Orthodox, and reprobate all those who will not be of their opinion. Many also are those, who have made the Holy Scriptures, the most excellent Collection of Writings which were ever extant, to speak such things, which hath caused others not brooking their Interpretations, nor being sufficient to find out better themselves, to have mean and injurious thoughts of them. And yet if any pious Man with the sincerest intentions, and endeavours to preserve, and vindicate their due honour by salving difficulties, which seem to check Reason, do advance any thing inconsistent with their settled Opinions and Systems, he is presently irreligious and a severe Atheist, too severe Censures, whatever their mistakes may be. But they are much more numerous still, who have made up such an

Hotch-potch in Religion, by their Additions to the Holy Scriptures, from pretended or enthusiastical Revelations, forged or false Miracles, Traditions, Ecclesiastical Authority and Infallibility, as first, to turn men's Stomachs against it, and at last, to cause a great many quite to discharge themselves of it altogether. But of these, and such like, I shall say no more at present: But go on to the next general Head.

2^{ly}, To propose some remedies proper to prevent, or repress the influences of these Causes of Infidelity; whereof some are more general, some more particularly relating to some Causes and Circumstances.

The first of these is,

1st, To advise and assist Men to improve, and advance their Knowledge to the highest Degree they are capable of. For it seems just to deal so uprightly, and plainly with the World, as not to make use of mere Authority, instead of understanding and reason, where men are truly capable and honest; though, where they are ignorant, but yet conceited, self-willed or dishonest, in things of importance and consequence, Authority must be allowed to interpose for their own, and the publick good,

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good, which otherwise would greatly suffer. Let therefore Men know, as much as they can, and examine these great verities with the greatest severity. Assuredly the more they know, the more reason they will see to believe them seriously, and resolutely to live according to them. *Search the Scriptures*, saith our Saviour to the unbelieving Jews (*John 5. 39.*) to convince them that he was the promised *Messias*, and the Person to whom all his Characters there did agree. So say we, *Search the Scriptures*, Nature it self, and Reason too, for they bear witness of all these great Truths. But then search them thoroughly, examine them to the bottom, see clearly, reason carefully and justly; weigh all things with indifferency and impartiality; which will be presently a direction by it self. Otherwise, as the Jews did erroneously interpret the Holy Scriptures, and conclude from them: So may Men here through want of patience, and attention, and apprehension, err and mistake in their Conclusion, concerning the great Truths of Morality and all Religions.

We heartily desire, that men's Faith and Belief may be the effect of a plain, serious and deliberate Conviction, more than of Custom, where it may be. And truly

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then, as well as when it is wrought in the heart by the grace of God, (which is another Cause mentioned in the Scripture) great is its Power, and forcible its Operation, and life it self is at its devotion and service. Such was the effect of it in all the Apostles, and particularly such is the Faith in Jesus Christ, mentioned of Saint *Thomas*, and Saint *Peter*, when one cries out, *my Lord, and my God*, and the other, *Lord whither should we go, thou hast the word of Eternal Life*. Let that then be the first remedy against Infidelity, viz. the utmost improvement and best exercise of our knowledge and reason.

2ly, Possess we our minds with a sincere and zealous Honesty and Probity. By which, I mean, a strong habitual propension and inclination to that which is right and just. This will have three Effects very proper to beget, or confirm a right belief of the Truth, and to preserve us in it.

The *First*, A fervent love of the Truth.

The *Second*, A free and ingenuous acknowledgment of it, where-ever we discover it, be it for us, or be it against us.

Thirdly, A desire to act suitable and live according to it.

I say,

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I say, a sincere and resolute Probity hath these effects. For surely, never any honest man doubted whether it was material, more fit and just (of better effect) for a good man who will make good use of his knowledge, to be knowing rather than ignorant, or to believe the truth rather than a lye, in order to direct him in all his inward Motions and outward Actions. Without the first, we shall not trouble our selves to search, or find the truth. Without the second, when we know it, we shall either not believe, or deny it if possible ; or if by the clearness and evidence we cannot do that, yet we shall turn our minds away from it. Finally, without the third, we shall little esteem or use it. And indeed, the first, is always attended with the other two. For he that hath a great affection for truth, will readily embrace it where ever he discovers it, endeavour to recommend, and make the best use of it he can, shewing what influences it hath upon his heart and life. This excellent quality of our Spirits, is more than once commended and commanded in the Holy Scriptures. 'Tis this which our Saviour means in his Parable by the *honest and good heart, which having received the word, keeps it, and brings forth fruit*

fruit with patience, Luke 8. 15. It was the want of this, which was one of the Causes of the seduction from the Verity of the Gospel, in those who perished, *viz.* Because they received not the love of the truth, *i.e.* Not only the Gospel, particularly called the truth, but of truth in general, *1 Thess.* 2. 10. And it was this our Saviour, above all things, required in men to become his Disciples. And 'tis for this reason, together with the incomparable evidence of the truth of Christian Religion, that it is to be believed, that never an honest man of capacity, who hath been rightly instructed in the principal Doctrines of it, hath long held out against it, and finally disbelieved it. We may add to this natural effect of probity, the extraordinary and supernatural one, even in those who may be for some time doubtfull, or erroneous in those greatest Verities (so perhaps may God permit.) It procures God's especial care, to enlighten and encline such to the reception of truth.

3^{ly}, Another cure of this Infidelity is a branch of modesty; that is but a just and true esteem and value for our selves, and therefore particularly to be carefull, we entertain not too great a Conceit of our own ability and sufficiency above other
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mens, to find out the falsity or weakness, or uncertainty in common receiv'd opinions of consequence. If we seem to our selves to observe it, let us still be diffident of our own Judgment, and believe we may be mistaken, and that there may be something in them, or for them, which we do not yet see; and therefore reserve the alteration of our belief to further consideration: Those who are strongly conceited of their knowledge and sufficiency in judgment above other men, and are hugely pleased with it, are very forward and ambitious to shew it to themselves first, and then to other men; more especially in contradicting and correcting what is generally taught and believed, and that by the most esteem'd, and of the best Reputation and Authority.

The Holy Scripture hath given us this general advice also. *Rom. 12. 3. Not to think too highly of our selves, but soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* But because some men in their Infidelity, may rely more upon the Wit and Learning of one whom they much esteem, than upon their own, it is to be advised.

4ly, To have a great deference and respect to the most publick Testimony, or
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to the most general received Opinion ; so much the more still, by how much it is larger in respect of places and ages.

The least effect, this consideration ought to have upon us, is to make us cautious and suspicious, when we are inclined to believe and advance any Opinion contrary, because it appears true to our selves, or some few other really knowing men. We ought diligently and impartially to examine what it is, in the common Opinion, we cannot perswade our selves to be true, and how such a general mistake should come to pass. He that contradicts an Universal belief, had need be the wisest of men, and he that rejects a very general one, should be very wise. The first is not to be done without a Demonstration, and even that which so appears to us is reasonably to be suspected ; though, till we see otherwise, it cannot be denied by us ; because, in a thing a thousand times considered and debated, it may seem much, that none before hath light upon this Demonstration, though I do not say it is impossible. And, as for those perswasions which are very general in things judged of great concern, and consequently, most frequently brought into conversation, writing and practice, it had need be a very
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great evidence; and having lain long under variety of examination, is at last also generally approved, that should entirely remove or displace them. Yet I deny not, but a man may have sometime a reason sufficient at first to suspect, to doubt, to say, that the new Opinion looks with a good countenance, and seems not to want a fair probability. And then it seems no more than Justice, and a thing becoming the publick Care, that it should have a fair hearing.

But here too, that we be not imposed upon, we are to take a true account of the Universality, or Generality of received persuasions; not call those of one Nation or Country, or perhaps one quarter of the World, introduced, and maintained by mere interest, cunning and force, or of one, or some few Ages; I say, we must not call these universal, or more general than indeed they are. This is the fault and folly of the Roman Church, which will needs have Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Image and Saint Worship, and an hundred others, to be the Catholick Opinions, and Practices in the Church of Christ; when we can produce whole Countries and Nations greater than theirs now, and many more Ages, and the best even of their own Church,
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which neither believed nor practised such things.

This remedy is proper against blameable singularity, whether out of ignorance or affectation. I will add but one more, and so have done with this general head also. And that is,

54. That as it hath been already a general Advice to possess our minds thoroughly with probity and plain honesty, and consequently a prevalent love of the truth: So it will much help and assure the effect thereof, to purge them of all prejudices which may oppose it; and to leave truth and honesty as few, and as weak Enemies in our Breasts as it is possible for us. We must therefore turn out, and send away all unreasonable Inclinations, Humours, Appetites and Passions, which may have any influence upon our understanding, and judgment, in our enquiring or assent to any truth: We are to keep our minds sincere and upright.

This will prevent or repress the Influences of many Causes of Infidelity at once. For in pursuance and application of this general Direction, we shall free our minds from the love of any lusts, from the extravagant and most unreasonable desire of liberty, uncontrollableness and independency,

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dency, from pride, vain self-conceit, and affectation of singularity, from the humour of setting our selves in good earnest to oppose and contradict, from wrath and impatience against God Almighty and his Providence: from spite and envy against knowledge and goodness, and good men, against their reputation and interest in the World; and finally, from Scepticism it self (or as I now take the word) from timidity, inconstancy, instability of judgment and assent, in which there seems some passion and inclinations without reason, as well as in all the rest. Then shall we be clear and free to believe the truth, merely, because it is the truth, as far as we can apprehend, and for no other reason whatsoever. Till we have thus cleansed our souls, deposed and laid aside all these prejudices, the more ingenious and witty we are, the greater is our danger of error and unbelief; and the common sort of men who have not so much Wit, Haughtiness, Self-conceit, and Pride, do with much more safety and security, follow the easie and natural Sense of their own minds, and the common belief of the World, who are wiser than themselves.

And now, what use shall we make of this whole Discourse? I shall make but one

one inference from it; and that is, If what we have all this time been delivering be truth and reason, as I hope it is, then it is our Duty to contradict the *Fool* here in the Text, and that two ways, both in his Infidelity, and in his consequent Practice. Hath the vitious *Fool said in his heart there is no God*, or no Providence: Let us deliberately, peremptorily and decretorily conclude in our hearts, and confess it with our mouths, that there is a God, and verily, that this God judgeth in the Earth. But then let us be sure, boldly to oppose and contradict him in the consequence of our Faith, else our Faith and Profession will serve us to no purpose, but to condemn us out of our own mouths, or it will be suspected, that our inward Faith and outward Profession do not agree; that we say one thing as loud as any, and think another. At least, that our Faith is very slight, cold and rare, and therefore little valued by us. For a serious, express, firm and frequent Faith, or actual Assent, especially after deliberation or doubting, is a great matter and very operative. We see the settled Opinions of men in other Affairs of Life, how sturdy and forcible they are. They govern even their Passions, and Persons, and are difficultly mastered, or hindered by

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by any opposition. So would it be also in Divine Faith, if it were as well rooted in our hearts, and as frequently made actual use of. Is then this wicked *Fool* corrupt, and vitious? Hath he done abominable Works? Let it be our firmest resolution, and utmost care and endeavour, to be of an incorrupt, sound and strong Vertue, and a laudable and amiable Practice, and dogood Works. But more particularly, and immediately, the Vertue which our belief in God, his Nature, Attributes and Actions should produce and preserve is that of Piety and Religion, or Divine Worship, in which I comprehend all our Duty to this God. Let us then spare him as many thoughts as we can, and contemplate his Beauty and Glory, as much as our frail Nature and Condition will bear; let us conceive the most worthily of him; let us honour him with all the force of our Souls, love him with all our might above all things together, both in Heaven and Earth; rejoyce and be happy in his Favour, and fear his displeasure; put our ultimate trust in him alone, and above all, entirely resign up our Wills to his, in whatever is to be done or undergone by us, and all his Creatures; that

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his Will may be done both in Heaven and Earth. This which is the internal Worship of God, we are at all fit Seasons and Circumstances, to signifie by our Lauds, Praises, Prayers, Thanksgivings, solemn Profession of a sincere, universal, constant, perpetual Obedience to all his Commands and Appointments, and above all by the Tenor of our Life and Actions, which is External Worship.

Behold a heart and life futable to our Faith, and to the God in whom we believe. An employment worthy indeed of all reasonable Creatures, from the highest to the lowest. The perfection of all their noble Powers and Exercise of them. This Religion and Conversation with the Deity, is the highest Accomplishment and Felicity of any spiritual Nature. All other objects do not fill their Capacities. This State we are all here as much as we can (which is but little) to endeavour to attain to. The rest we are to desire, hope, and prepare our selves for.

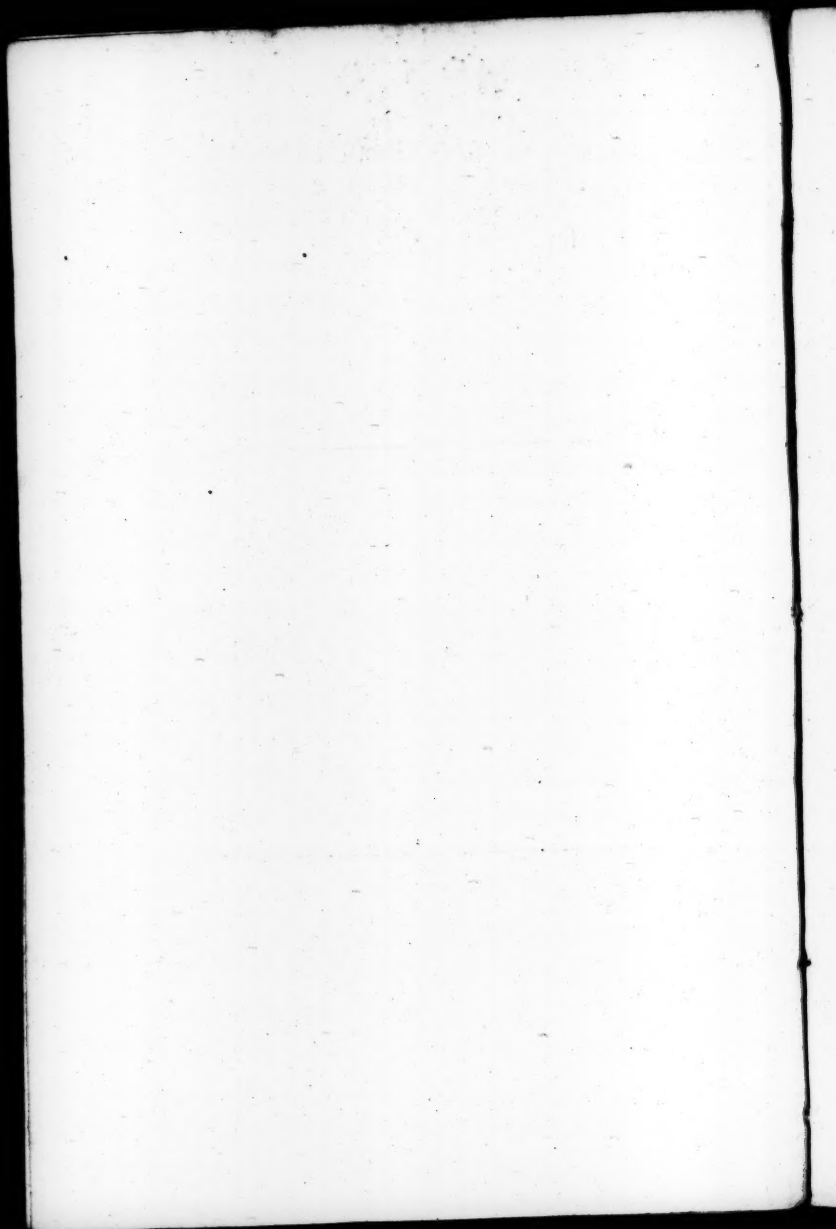
Now to this God, whom the wicked *Fool* denies; who made and upholds all things by the Omnipotent Word of his Power, and governs all things by his All-wise Providence; to this one most excellent infinite

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nite Nature in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be all this inward and outward Worship, constantly rendered by Men and Angels, from henceforth, and for ever-more. *Amen.*

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SERMON V.

ROM. V. 1.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we
have peace with God, through our
Lord Jesus Christ.*

THere are hardly any words of the Holy Scripture, more common in the Mouths of Christians, especially reformed, or uttered with more affection, or more frequently made use of, than these of *Justification by Faith*. Nor is there any Doctrine of Christianity, which hath of late been disputed, with more Volumes or greater Heat, than that which is said to be contained under them.

To which we may add, that in truth, it is a Doctrine both in matter and phrase, in great measure, new and proper to the Christian Religion, and yet of a great importance ; honourable to God, and comfortable to Men. For the most devout, and

even inspired by God among the Jews, as far as appears, knew little of the principal Part of it, and the most learned among the Heathens nothing. Nay, it seems, by what we read, that it hath been defectively, and but ill-understood even by Christians themselves, till of late.

And although in a good part of this last Century, it hath been much cleared and recovered by many learned Men, who began better to understand the Style, Phrase, Occasion, and other Circumstances of the New Testament; and by none more, perhaps, than our own judicious, pious Paraphrast: yet, me-thinks, somewhat more may be done in the matter.

I shall at present, only, briefly and plainly endeavour, the explication and application of the words.

The two things which deserve a particular explication are, (1) *Justification*, (2) *Faith*.

I. For the word *Justification*. I take the original and general Notion of it to be, the doing by any Person (for to that I now restrain it, though it be spoken of Actions also) as useth to be done to one who is just and righteous: *i e* some way to shew favour, or to do good to him, whether by approbation, commendation
or

or beneficence. Of this general sense of the word, it is easie to see that the juridical Sense of acquitting, absolving, &c. is but one instance or kind.

This usage may be in respect of some particular Act, or Quality only, or of a man's general Temper of Mind and Course of Life. We have several Examples of the first. It is said by our Saviour of the Pharisee, who went up with the Pharisee to the Temple to pray, that he went away rather *justified* than the other (or justified, and not the other, according to a known Hebraism.) justified *i. e.* accepted, approved by God, in that particular Act of his Prayer to God, as useth, or ought to be done to him who is just, and doth well. The same is the Sense of the word, *Rom.* 8. 33. 'Tis God that *justifieth*, who is he that condemneth? We know the World doth condemn, reproach, hate us Christians for our Religion, for our believing upon Jesus: but that we despise, becaule we know too, that we have the favour and approbation of God for so doing.

Thus also it is recorded of *Phinehas*, *Psalme* 106. 30, 31. that he executed judgment (slew *Zimri* and *Cozbi* in the Act of Uncleanness) and it was counted to him for righteousness, or for *justification*, or the

effect of it was *justification* (for *divergence* and *divergence*, have often the same signification, as *Gal. 2. 21.*) *i. e.* he was, and ought to be, and ever shall be unto all Generations greatly approved, and highly praised for that Action in so eminent a degree, righteous and just, done with so much Zeal and Courage for the Honour of his God, and the good of his People. And we read too, how he was rewarded by God for it with the high Priest-hood in his Family. Nay, the *justification* of *Abraham* himself, is said sometimes to be in the same sense, for some one particular eminent Act of Obedience to God, *Rom. 3. 18. Heb. 11. 8, 17. Jam. 2. 21.* though at other times for his general Faith, and Piety, or obediential Temper to God. And of this *justification* he is set forth as an eminent and extraordinary Example, *Rom. 4.* So it is in like manner with all good men, who walk in the steps of the Faith of *Abraham*, as the Apostle phraseth it, *viz.* who are religious, obsequious to the Will of God, in what manner, and whensoever he shall sufficiently make it known to them; and consequently men of sincere Probity of Spirit, devoted to all that is good and just. Of which hereafter.

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This usage of a just man, or *justification* may be distinguished into (1) negative, or doing him no harm : (2) positive, doing good to him, bestowing certain benefits, and positive favours upon him. But there are three more remarkable instances of both these, and frequently mentioned in the Scripture. The first is remission of sins upon repentance, or an omission of punishment for them : like as one that hath been just, and never committed any sin, useth to be treated. He suffers no evil from God for sin, and this is negative. The second is the Holy Spirit's influences, operations in the Souls of Men. And the third is Eternal Salvation upon perseverance in a good and holy life. All these are more particularly regarded by *St. Paul* in the Text : As if he had said. Therefore being by Faith (of which presently) restored to the Favour of God, particularly expressed in the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the promises and assurances of Eternal life, we have peace with God. We are in a state of Amity and Friendship with him, and we have Peace and Tranquility in our own Consciences, which do not now threaten us with God's Anger or Punishment, and that through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now

Now if this be the true notion of *justification*, when it is joined with Faith, as I think it is: Then first, it is not the same with *sanctification*, or making a man inherent, holy and just. Justifying the ungodly through Faith in the Scripture-style, is not making an ungodly man godly, as the Papists, *Socinians* and *Grotius* would have it. A mistake in that learned Man, which hath led him into many other Misinterpretations of Scripture. Nor (2) is it in a strict Sense an accounting or reckoning a Man perfectly just, or more than he really and truly is: for that were to say, that God may be deceived, and judge things otherwise than they are. It is true, the Church of *England* in one of her Articles hath used the words, *accounting righteous for the merits of Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our works*. But there needs no force to make them signifie, *the treating or using as righteous*, for the Merit of Christ upon the condition of Faith, without any Merit on our part, which is the true Christian Doctrine of Justification, as we shall presently see. Nor (3) is Justification to pronounce or declare a Man inherently just, as it were in a solemn Sentence, who is not so; for this were to make God give a false sentence. Nor (4) is it to cover or
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cloth a Man (even a penitent sinner) with the pure Robes of Christ's perfect Righteousness, and then to appear to God, pure and spotless, as Jesus Christ himself: For this were to suppose God to look no further than the outside, and represent him like old *Isaac*, deceived by *Rebekah* and *Jacob*.

These are the notions of men, who seem never to attend to the proper Nature of things: but are content to talk only in Figures. And in truth they might do much more harm, if they were not antidoted by other plain Scripture Doctrines; such as that of the necessity of Holiness of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins and everlasting Salvation. Nor (5) is Justification God's imputing the Righteousness of Christ to Man, who lives in any sinfull Breach or Neglect of God's Law.

There is indeed a comfortable and true notion under those phrases; and that is, That sinners fare the better for the compleat Righteousness, or perfect Obedience of Christ. Great and many indeed were the benefits God was pleased to afford sinfull mankind, for the sake of Jesus Christ. No less than such as these; his long suffering and forbearance, all sorts of temporal Blessings, all the inward and outward means of Vertue and Goodness; All this even

even to sinners while sinners ; which some learned men have called degrees of remission of sins : I should rather say instances of *justification*, or dealing by men as useth to be done to the innocent and just, who had never offended. Then further, upon true repentance, entire pardon for all past sins : All in the other life, and all in this, except, what God in his fatherly Wisdom may think fit for our discipline and means of further improvement in Vertue and Holiness ; constant forgiveness upon constant repentance, for the interfering faults of good Men, and finally, Everlasting life. All this Men owe to the compleat Righteousness of Jesus Christ, from the beginning to the End of his life. It was for his sake, God was pleased to have any regard to, or compassion upon the degenerate Race of Mankind ; that God might by so eminently rewarding him, shew the World how acceptable to him Holiness and Vertue were, and encourage to the Attainment of the highest Degree of them possible. All this is true, and a reasonable Administration of God in the Government of the World. But yet it is not Justification it self. God's imputing Christ's Righteousness to us in such manner, is one Cause of our Justification : but Justification it self, or the

the using of us in such favourable and kind manner is the effect of that imputation. Nor (6) and lastly, is Justification a bare remission of sins. They who say so, speak too little: for the using a man as a Righteous and just man is not negative only, or doing him no harm; but positive, also doing him good; and therefore it contains not only security and exemption from the evil of suffering; but the bestowing the good things of enjoyment, the principal of which are, spiritual and eternal; the Assistances for Vertue here, and Heaven hereafter, or Grace and Glory as is usually said. I will only here observe, that although such as I have said, be the general notion of Justification of sinners: yet it must here in the Text be restrained to those instances of favour, which follow Faith taken for a quality in us: such as remission of sins, &c. because it is said *justified by faith*. Faith is the Cause of Justification, viz. a condition qualifying, or capacitating Cause. Justification, or being used kindly by God, is the effect of this our Faith. And so much for the Explication of the Term Justification.

In sum, this it is to use or treat a Person, as useth to be done to a just and good man, which is to do him no harm, but

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to bear him good Will, some way or other to do him good, shew him favour and kindness.

For the second Term *faith*, I mean, justifying or saving Faith, by which we are said to be justified, it is as much contested, and perhaps with more difficulty and less certainty resolved, than the former of *justification*.

I for my part have observed these three significations of it. The last of which I intend principally to enlarge my present Discourse upon.

First, The first Sense of it may be Piety, or Religion in general, or rather *religiousness*, i. e. Such an habitual Temper of mind, whereby a man is disposed to obey the Will of God : and consequently to do that which is right and just, however made known to him from God. It is this temper of Soul by which God estimates a good Man, and by which he is qualified for God's Approbation, Acceptance and Beneficence. Particularly in those great Instances of Pardon, Grace and Glory. Which if vigorous and prevalent, and constant enough to denominate us good men, will certainly exert it self in all actual Obedience of inward Will, and outward Action, when it is not necessarily hindered, as
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it may be, by pure and invincible Ignorance, by Diseases and Disorders of the Body, or any external Impediments. I say again, because I think it wants and deserves Observation, that it is according to the Degree and Constancy of this habitual Inclination of Soul that God estimates us, and we shall be dealt withall by him. Outward Actions, especially, and inward too are contingent, may cease, and are liable to an hundred Hindrances and Obstructions, when the habitual Inclination of the Will is a constant thing, and remains fixed in the Soul; which God certainly knows, though others, and even our own selves sometimes may be ignorant of it, so that the Jews from whom probably the *Mahometans* had it, might save themselves and God the labour of casting up, and weighing their good and bad Actions, to know which Number weighs most, and how the Case will stand with them in the Day of Judgment, any further than they are signs of the Degree and Constancy of habitual Temper, sometimes fallible enough. But let this stand for a little Digression. To return,

I cannot yet tell what better notion to fix upon *faith*, when it is said, *The just shall live by faith*, quoted by Saint Paul,
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Rom. 1. 17. and Gal. 3. 11. from Hab. 2. 4. to prove Justification not to be by the Law, but by Faith; and that too Synecdochically put, viz. The Doctrine of the Condition of Justification for all the rest of the Gospel-doctrine concerning it, as we shall presently more largely discourse. *The just shall live by faith*, i. e. A good and just Man by his Piety and Religiousness shall be in the Favour of God, so as to be safe and happy, when the proud and wicked Man forsaking God, shall be forsaken by him. An habitually Religious man, which will certainly produce actual Obedience to God, whensoever he sufficiently declares his Will and Laws, ever was, and ever will be approved, accepted and favoured by God. Which as he did once by *Moses*, so hath he in these last days more evidently and perfectly by his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is not necessary, that the just Man should live, or be justified only by the actual Observance of the Mosaical Law, which is what the Apostle proves by these words. Let us examine a little the importance of the whole Verse, in *Heb. 10. 38. and Hab. 2. 4. The just shall live by faith: but if he draws back* (so it is to be rendred, there being no *Th* there, but supposed to be put in by our own Interpreters,

terpreters, in favour of the Doctrines of absolute Election and Perseverance; *My Soul shall have no pleasure in him.* We shall not meddle with the difference of the *Heb. in Habb.* and this quotation by the Author to the *Hebrews*, but only observe, That *to live*, is to fare well from God, to be approved by him, and be in his favour, so as to receive from him the Promise of Salvation, and Deliverance from their suffering Condition here, or after this Life the reward of a happy Condition, or both; or as it is expressed in the next Verse, *the saving of the Soul.* This, I say, is the sense of *living* (as it is commonly of the Hebrew word *חַיָּה*) because, *God's having no pleasure in him*, i.e. God's disfavour, is opposed to it. Besides, in the *Gal. To live* (not only *vivere*, but *valere*) is plainly of the same importance with Justification; in the latter part of the Verse.

And then for Faith, *πίστις*, it is manifestly the believing of God's promises so effectually, as to produce an entire, submissive, and obsequious Temper of Heart to God, and consequently an actual Obedience, and doing the Will of God in the profession and practice of the Christian Religion; because it is opposed to a Man's withdrawing (*viz.*) from that his Duty to God, through fear

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or diffidence, or any other evil Affection. And it is of the same importance with that in the following Verse, *believing to the salvation of the Soul*, by which a good Man lives. Faith, by which a good Man lives, cannot be either according to common reason, or the Tenor of Revelation, a bare Assent to God's Veracity, Goodness and Power, or the fulfilling of his Promises; but the effect thereof, a dutifull and obediential Heart to God. It was in the same manner, that *Abraham* was justified (*viz.*) by his Piety, and generous, obediential Disposition of Soul towards the true God; ready and prepared cheerfully to receive and execute all his Commands though never so difficult, at all times. And as he was then justified by that pious Temper of Heart, manifesting it self in actual Obedience to the Commands of God then laid upon him: So shall we Christians (saith *St. Paul*) if we be of the same pious Temper of Soul with *Abraham*, exerting it self in an actual Obedience to the Laws of God now declared, and enjoyed by Jesus Christ. Nay, we may add, That the Jews themselves (though they little understood it) were all along justified upon the same Condition too. Not so much by the Observance of the particular Laws of *Moses*,
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as sent from God by *Moses*, as they stiffly contend (most of which were but temporary, and fitted for the particular Circumstances of that People) as by that devout Temper of Love, Reverence and Obedience to God, declaring his Will for that time by *Moses*. And where-ever that Temper was among the Jews, it had the same effect of actual Obedience to God by Jesus Christ, when he was sufficiently preached, and made known to them. True, sincere Piety, the Love of Truth and Goodness prevailing against all worldly Interest and Prejudices, brought the Jews themselves most certainly over to Christianity. If we would know more of this Temper by Example, we may see the 119 *Psalms*, the History of *Cornelius*, those of the New Covenant, into whose Hearts and Minds God will put and write his Laws, *Heb.* 10. 16. those whom our Saviour calls his Sheep, who know, hear his Voice, and follow him. And what is said of the Son of God himself, *Heb.* 10. 7. *Lo, I come, (in the volume of thy book it is written of me) to do thy Will, O God.* These are the Persons, this the Qualification, Condition, and Capacity for God's Favour, Approbation, Commendation and Reward; or in one word, for his *Justification*; A submissive, obediential Temper of Heart to God. M 2 I

I say a Qualification or Condition of God's Favour in general, and particularly expressed in remission of sins: which by no means excludes the Consideration of Christ's Obedience and Sacrifice, which ever was another Cause of Justification from the beginning, and ever will be. This sense of Faith, (*viz.* Piety) will not be thought strange by those who have observed the Hebrew way of speaking. Thus we read, *Exod. 14. ult.* that the Israelites *believed* in the Lord and his Servant *Moses*, [וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ] *i. e.* they submitted themselves to God's Laws and Government by *Moses*. Their belief or faith in God and *Moses*, was a disposition of mind in them, to observe the Commands of God by *Moses*. For it is of the same general Importance with the Phrase immediately before, *The people feared the Lord*. The *Israelites* were (as they professed) ready to hear and do the Will of the Lord by *Moses*. So they express themselves, *Exod. 19. 8.* *All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do to obey the Voice of the Lord, and to keep his Covenant*. Nor is it to be doubted, but that the *Israelites*, if they were really in their hearts what they professed with their mouths, were then also justified, and in the Favour of God, before they

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they had heard any one *particular* Command of the Law from God by *Moses*, either Ceremonial, as Circumcision, Festivals, Sacrifice, &c. or Moral : and if any of them then died (as no doubt some did) they were also saved.

Nor is the reason of this signification of *faith*, when it is joined with Justification and Salvation, less easie. 'Tis because Faith in its strict and primary Sense of *assent* to some Truths, necessarily preceeds this Religiousness of Heart, this habitual Piety. A Man must firmly believe, that there is right and wrong, moral good and evil, that the Will and Laws of God are the most infallible Rules of it, that he will reward and punish the Observers or Transgressors of them, before he is effectually resolved, or habitually disposed, universally to be obedient to God, and to please him, as the Authour to the *Hebrews* hath it *Chap. II*: In like manner, the love and fear of God are every where used in the Scriptures Synecdochically, for all Religion and Vertue, because those Affections, in their strict and proper Sense, produce in us a disposition of Soul to universal Obedience to him, and consequently all Instances of Righteousness.

Such may be the first Notion of *justifying*, or saving Faith. M 3 Se-

Secondly, A second is more particular and limited, and that is an obedient Temper of Heart to God, making known his Will and Laws to us by Jesus of *Nazareth*, the true Christ, or by being a Christian. It was one of the principal Errours of the Jews, against whom *St. Paul* in various places disputes, about the Point of Justification, that they would admit no other Condition of it, than the Observance of the Mosaical Law, which he calls the *Law*, and the *Works of the Law*. *St. Paul* maintains against them, that it was not : but a vertuous and holy Temper of Soul, which loved Righteousness and hated Iniquity, and consequently most desirous to know and do the Will of God, when, and in whatsoever Instances he should please to declare and reveal it. But more especially, and particularly, now by Jesus of *Nazareth*, the true *Messias* described, foretold, and promised to their own Nation.

He was now appointed by God to be his Vicegerent, and Legislator under himself to all Mankind to the End of the World, as *Moses* was for a certain time only to the Jews. Now God expects and requires Submission and Obedience to his Laws by this Jesus, from all Men every where. All, I say, to whom this Declaration of his Will shall

shall come, and particularly from the Jews, to whom he was preached by himself and other Disciples. Which if they did, and persever'd, they should be *justified* by God, and in his Favour, particularly receive from him remission of sins, the Holy Ghost, and Eternal Salvation.

Thirdly and lastly, Some have named a third Sense of *faith*, and that is Faith objectively taken, or the Doctrine of Christianity, or if you please, the Christian Religion. For Religion objectively taken, I would call a Doctrine revealed from God: or a System of revealed Doctrines, and that which is by Jesus Christ, the Christian Doctrine or Religion, so that Justification by Faith, is the same with Justification; according to the Doctrine of the Gospel, or according to the Christian Religion; and Justification by the Law, or Works of the Law, is Justification according to the Doctrine of the Mosaical Law. Not that which *Moses* himself really taught, or delivered, but that which the Jewish Doctors, the Interpreters of that Law, and the generality of the Jews, taught and believed in *St. Paul's* Time. Such may be the sense of *Rom. 3. 22. The Righteousness of God by faith*, i. e. taught by the Gospel; and then fitly follows the particulars of that Doctrine,

ctrine, in the four next Verses, and *v.* 28. *We conclude that a man is justified by faith,* without the deeds of the Law; and *v.* 30. It is one God which shall justify the Circumcision *by faith*, and Uncircumcision *through faith*. See also *Gal.* 3. 17. and *Rom.* 10. 6. And truly such a kind of Language and Speaking, seems agreeable enough to that of the most Ancient and Modern Jews; Nay, I think, to one who never so little considers, it is plain. For the Righteousness of God, and the Righteousness which is of Faith, or by the Faith of Jesus Christ, (*Rom.* 10. 3, 6. and *Rom.* 3. 21, 22.) are the same thing. But the Righteousness of God is manifestly that way or method of Justification (all the Causes of Justification together) which God had appointed after the Coming of Christ under the Gospel, and which Saint Paul, and the rest of the Apostles taught. For *δικαιοσύνη* there, as frequently elsewhere, (*Gal.* 5. 5. *Rom.* 3. 21, 22. 30. compared with, *Rom.* 9. 31.) is put for *δικαίωσις*, as appears from the opposition of *δικαιοσύνη θεῶν*, the Righteousness of God, (*Rom.* 10. 2.) to that of the Jews own Righteousness.

To interpret that of inherent or imputed Righteousness is not probable, though it may be a possible sense, which sense
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of the word is yet more plain from *v. 10.* *with the heart man believeth to righteousness, i. e. to justification.* From hence it follows, that the Righteousness of Faith, is the way of Justification by God's Appointment, and Command preached by the Apostles the Ministers of the Gospel, or Christian Doctrine. Again, the Righteousness of God and of Faith is opposed to the Righteousness of the Law, of the Works of the Law, of their own Righteousness, and *St. Paul's* own Righteousness of the Law, *Phil. 3. 9.* and therefore must have the same kind of sense. But these Righteousnesses are all manifestly no other thing than Justification, according to the Doctrine and Belief of the Jewish Doctors of the Law, the Generality of the Jews, and *St. Paul* himself before his Conversion to Christianity.

• And what if we should reduce the other two Senses of justifying Faith to this last, and say, That Faith where it signifies primarily, the Condition or qualifying Cause in us of Justification, as hath been explained, may be taken Synecdochically; a part for the whole, one part of the Christian Doctrine concerning Justification, and that which was more earnestly contested by the Jews, for the whole of that Doctrine. A thing ordinary enough in the
Style

Style of the Holy Scripture. Nor do I see it besides the mind of the Apostle. Beside, if this sense be but equally probable, it will be the best taken, because it comprehends the other two.

Now to know what were the principal Differences between the Doctors of the Jews, and Christians concerning Justification, we are to consult both the Scriptures, and the Jewish Authors themselves.

And, as I think, we may therein observe these Five.

First, The Jews were of opinion, that there were some men who needed no Justification at all, no favour of God in that particular of remission of sins. Some of these they thought had never sinned in all their lives; the other again by their own study and exercise, became without all faults, and their exact Righteousness made recompence for their past Transgression. These they called perfectly Righteous, צדיקים גמורים, as they had two sorts more to appear in the Day of Judgment, (*viz.*) perfectly wicked, and a middle between both; when as *Mahomet's* Disciples fancy God will make use of Scales, to weigh good and bad Works one against the other; and if the Scales happen to be even, mercy

*Poc. ad
por. Mes.
not. cap. 6.
Tal. Rosch.
hazib. c. 1.*

mercy will weigh it down on the favourable side. Of this sort among the Jews might be the Pharisee, who went to the Temple with the Publican to pray, for he recites only his religious Actions, but saith not a word of any thing ever ill done. And it is said, *Luke 18.* that our Saviour spake that Parable against certain which trusted in themselves that they were Righteous. And the occasion of the Parable, *Luke 11.* and *Matth. 8. 13.* is some Argument, that it was an opinion among the Jews, that there were some men who needed no repentance. Perhaps *St. Paul* might once reckon himself among these perfectly Righteous, when he knew no better; for he saith of himself, *That touching the Righteousness which was in the Law, i. e. in Vogue and Reputation among the Lawyers or Doctors of the Law, he was blameless Phil. 3.* And I remember some-where in the Talmud, to have read of some Masters of such perfect Sanctity, as never to have committed one sin, and to have been such from, and in their Mother's Wombs, as *Jeremiah* is said to be; which there signifies no more, than his being so early by God designed and separated to his Prophetical Office and Employment. Now this opinion of theirs *St. Paul* denies, affirming that

that all Men (except the Blessed Jesus, the true *Messias*) have been, and still continue in some Degree, or other, Sinners; and that all Men therefore stood in need of continual Repentance and Remission; That Jews and Gentiles have all fallen short of the Glory of God, and were guilty before him; That even the best of the Jews themselves, were not exact Observers of their own Law, especially in the inward and moral part of it. This *St. Paul* proves out of their own sacred Authors, which he quotes, *Rom. 3.*

Secondly, (b) The Jews held generally, that there was no need of the Merits or Consideration of any other, no not of the *Messias* himself, for whose sake Justification or Remission of Sins, particularly, should be granted by God: But that Repentance, good Works, Fastings, Prayers, Sacrifices, Oblations, temporal Punishments, or finally, corporeal Death were sufficient for the expiation of all sin whatsoever. Or if any thought that there were any sins to be forgiven for the *Messias's* sake, as some few of the Ancients thought *(c)*, yet these were but few, and restrained the Privilege to those of their own Nation, and Religion: and lastly, however they would not hear of such a thing, as that it was for the sake of
Jesus

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Jesus of *Nazareth*, whom they denied to be their *Messias*, and rejected with an obstinate scorn. To this *St. Paul* opposeth three things, and maintains, *First*, That God ever did, and ever would justifie, and forgive sinners, upon Consideration of, and with regard to the perfect Obedience and Sacrifice of the *Messias*, and not without it. *Secondly*, That this great Favour and Indulgence of Heaven was extended to all mankind. And, *Thirdly*, That Jesus of *Nazareth* was this true *Messias*. And that all this, as it was in it self most reasonable, so was it agreeable to *Moses* and the Prophets, and now with such undeniable Proof, and clear Evidence, declared to be the Will of God, that it was not indeed any longer to be disputed.

Thirdly, The Jews advanced yet further and affirmed, that their Repentance, Prayers, Sacrifices, and all other their good Works and Qualities, were not barely a capacitating Condition of Justification, forgiveness of Sins, and the happy Life to come, but meritorious; and that God was obliged in Justice to give these for them. And as for the perfectly Righteous who needed no Repentance, no question but that God was strictly bound to reward them with a future, happy State of Life, especially

ally at the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Day of the great Judgment.

Nay, when they wanted Merits of their own, they had recourse to those of their Ancestours, *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and others; like the Works of Supererogation among the Papists.

Nay, some were so besotted with vaint Conceit and Arrogance, that they thought God chose their Ancestors for their Merit, and was in love with their Posterity for it too. And still there remains among them an Enthusiastical and Arrogant strain, beyond all this, probably older than *St. Paul*; That God created the World for their sakes, foreseeing, I suppose, what a lovely and excellent People they would prove. We need but look into both Ancient and Modern Jewish Authors to learn all this. Though, if we knew nothing of this their Arrogant Opinion and Temper from themselves, yet the Holy Scripture would sufficiently inform us (*d*).

Now, *St. Paul*, so zealous for the Honour of God and Jesus Christ, most deservedly in his disputes with them about Justification, represseth and refutes such insolent and false Opinion and Language. And therefore asserts the Righteousness or Justification of God, or of God's Appointment
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by Faith of Jesus Christ, described and taught in the Gospel to all them that believe. This way of Justification of God's Appointment was first to believers, *i. e.* real Christians in their hearts and lives, And then through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus the propitiation; and lastly, freely by the grace of God. This, God's way of Justification being thus, upon the Condition of our Christian Obedience, and Consideration of perfect Obedience, and Death of Jesus, and of the free grace of God, every way excludes the boasting of the Jews; which they thought in their way they had so much reason for. This Righteousness of God was neither without the interposition of the perfect Obedience and Sacrifice of Jesus the true *Messias*, nor by any Merit of theirs by which they may claim Justification, as a Debt from God. Nor was it so much, as upon Condition of the Observation of the Law of *Moses*, (of which presently) much less upon the Account of its Merit, *Rom. 3. 22.*

And because the Jews had so great an Opinion of the Merit of their Father *Abraham*. He affirms, that *Abraham* himself was justified in the same manner too. He was justified by Faith too; taking Faith first for a godly, religious Temper of Heart

as the Condition ; and then this one part of the Gospel-doctrine of Justification for the whole of it, by a Figure ordinary enough with *St. Paul*, and other Holy Writers, as hath been before observed. But he denies peremptorily, that *Abraham* was justified by his Works of any sort, *i. e.* that he was justified either according to their Doctrine in general, or more particularly by the Merit of his Works.

He doth not deny Justification by good Works, as a Qualification or Condition, which is the Sense of *St. James* writing against an Errour of some Christians, who taught a bare Belief in Jesus, and Profession of it enough. And it is likely they had it from the Jews too ; the Vulgar of whom thought their mere being Jews sufficient for Salvation.

Nor hath either the Jewish or Christian Church ever wanted such sort of People, and very numerous too ; especially in times and places of great ignorance, when their idle, ignorant and corrupt guides themselves have taught them as much. *St. Aug.* tells us, that there were some in his time, who believed all to be saved who gave Alms, who said daily in the Lord's Prayer, *Forgive us our Trespases*, &c. and did forgive when asked,

Civ. Dei
lib. 21.
cap. 22.

ed, sometimes; who remained in the Church, however they lived otherwise. And he believes there were many in *St. Paul's* time too, who not rightly understanding *St. Paul's* Justification by Faith without Works did really think, that having once believed in Christ, they should be saved by that Faith, though they lived wicked and flagitious Lives. Those Christians in *St. James* seem such a sort of People: And if the Epistle to the *Romans* was written before that of *St. James*, they also might be led into such a Conceit by *St. Paul* himself misunderstood (not minding what he had otherwise by word or writing every where taught) and particularly in *Rom.* 10. 9, 10. *That if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto Righteousness, (i. e. Justification) and with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.*

Here it is observable, how one Circumstance of the Persons who are written to, and their Opinion, may determine the sense of words. *St. Paul* wrote to the Jews, who affirmed, that their good Works merited Justification; *St. James* to Christians who believed, and taught that they

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were

were not so much as a qualification or condition, and no way necessary to it.

They both wrote true: Justification was, and was not by good Works. It was by them as a qualification and condition, it was not by them as meritorious in the most received and common sense of that word. But to return to *St. Paul*, he flatly denies that *Abraham* himself was justified by the Merits of his Works, so as that God was in manner of a Debtour obliged to it; much less was his Posterity. *Abraham* indeed was a Person extraordinary, and so might justly pretend to some privilege amongst Men: but had no reason to claim or challenge any thing; particularly, so great things as remission of sins, and salvation from God, merely for his own sake, or in such manner as a Creditour or Servant, may do from his Debtour or Master, *Rom. 4.*

This Doctrine of his so directly opposite to theirs, he proves from *Moses* and *David*; for one saith, that *Abraham's* Faith (his Piety and Obedience) was imputed to him for Righteousness or Justification; and the other, blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Now this word *λογίζεσθαι* impute, imports in God nothing of payment of a Debt, nor of Merit

rit from him: but an Act of Discretion, Liberty, Choice, Goodness; though most wise and reasonable too, in pursuance of the one great End of all his Counsels and Actions: This was the Doctrine of *St. Paul*, and the other Apostles else-where, as if it were a matter they much desire Christians should be well instructed in.

And in truth it is most agreeable to natural Reason: For to talk of Merit in its proper sense, and so as it usually signifies amongst us, between God and the best of Men, or the most excellent Angel, is to give a very false Idea of the Case. For to merit from any one, is first to profit or advantage him some way; and then it is to impart some-what of his own; and lastly, he that receives the Benefit, is bound to requite it by some Law without, and superiour to himself. Now there is nothing of all this, between God and his Creature. For, can a Man profit his Maker? A Master indeed may be benefited by the labour and service of his Servant. Next the strength, industry, and fidelity of the Servant, is his own in respect of his Master; he never had any of this from him. But what have we, which we have not received from God? Our very Being, Faculties, Liberty, all kind

of Ability and Capacity, are they not the free gifts of our great and good Creatour? Finally, what Law is there superiour to God's own Nature and Will, to oblige him to any Action? who can, or ought to say to him, What dost thou! not so much in respect of his irresistible Power (for there is no Tyranny in Heaven) as his all comprehending Wisdom, his immutable Righteousness and essential Goodness: It is true, there is such a thing as just and right, eternal and unchangeable: But it is therefore so, because God is so. It was eternally a property of the Divine Will (if I may so speak) as truth was of the Divine Understanding. It is his own immutable Nature to do that which is right and fit. That which we call right, fit, just, is a due Relation, or Habitude of all Will, Action, Power to its Object; which Object is *bonum*, good, and that the greatest too in respect of intention, extension and duration, (and there can be no more respects.) This is the ultimate, due End and Object, I say, of all Will, Action, and Power whatsoever. But this Relation or *χρῆσις*, is therefore eternal and immutable, only because God is so. It could never have existed without a Subject, and that Subject the Divine Will exists necessarily. The very Being

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ing or Existence therefore of any such thing, depends upon the Existence of the Divine Will. Besides, this Relation which we call *Right and Just* is something, wherefore it as all other somethings, must have the Will of God or active Power, or his Nature for its Cause. But though Right and Just depend upon the Divine Will for its eternal Existence ; yet we cannot conceive it ever separated from them, or without them : We cannot but conceive it a pure perfection, and therefore cannot but attribute it to God, an All-perfect Being.

For an instance or application ; we say, that the Object of God's will, is always the Universal good, the good of all Beings, the greatest good, either fit or possible ; and in order to this he wills, *bonè bonis, malè malis*, he justifies the Righteous, and condemns the Wicked : He orders and distributes respective recompences of rewards and punishments to the good and bad ; the quantity, quality, time and other Circumstances are to be left to the Divine Wisdom. But this proceeds from no Cause without the Divine Will it self. We cannot but conceive the Divine Will thus to act. There is no Power or Will to determine or constrain it. God's Nature is

such, that we cannot but conceive him to will, and do that which is just and right, (for the greatest good of all reasonable Beings) and yet most freely, because it is his own immutable Nature: for what can be more free than what is natural? Liberty in God is not an indifferency (for that would be an imperfection) but that infinite force and delight with which he acts. I have no better words to express my meaning by. Liberty and Necessity therefore in God are not only consistent, but inseparable. It is right and just for God to reward the good, who keep his Commandments and observe his Laws, which are the infallible Rules and Instances of what is right and just; but we must not say God is bound to it, or that those who are good merit it from him, in a strict and most received Sense, and common Usage, because that imports, as if he must do it whether he would or no, and there were some Law or Person without, or superiour to himself. We may and ought to say, that God most certainly will do so, because it is his own immutable Nature to do it. *The Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, and his Countenance beholdeth the upright.*

'Tis true (to put an end to this not useless, or very impertinent Digression) that

that worthy Qualities and Actions, *i. e.* such as do effect or but tend to the common good, that are usefull or beneficial to the World, do justly entitle any Person to a Reward, such as Honour, Power, Wealth or pleasurable Life, because those same Qualities and Actions are thereby maintained, increased and propagated, and consequently the best and happiest State of the World, furthered and advanced. Every one in his place, and according to his Ability, is bound to this, but especially all sorts of Governours. And such qualities have, and may with good reason obtain the Name of Merits amongst Men, and in respect of them in its most common and received sense. For they are the property of those who possess them, they never received them from other Men, they are beneficial and usefull to Men, and there is a superiour Law and Power to oblige, and compell Men to reward them, none of which can be said in respect to God. Though it being a congruous and reasonable thing, as is above mentioned, God always doth, and always will, necessarily from his own Nature, will and act in such manner. And if there be no more meant by *meriting* than that, we may safely in such a sense be said to merit from God too.

And in this sense it is, that *St. Paul* saith, that God is not *unrighteous* to forget your work and labour of love, *Heb. 6. 9.* And henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing, *2 Tim. 4. 8. i. e.* It is a congruous and fitting thing of best effect certainly in God's Government of the World, that good Men should be so used by him.

I have been some-what the longer in this Digression, because I believe the whole Controversie about Merit, between the Jews and *St. Paul* with his Christians, and between the Pontificians and the Protestants, may, by the little that hath been here said, be easily cleared and decided. At last we conclude then with *St. Paul*, and the Gospel-doctrine against the Jewish Doctors, and the legal Doctrine which they taught, *viz.* That we sinners are justified by God, and more particularly upon our repentance and perseverance in Holiness of heart and life, pardoned and saved, not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, not by any Merit in us from him, in its proper sense as hath been explained; but according to his Mercy, and
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by the free grace, and undeserved goodness of God, *Rom.2.24. Eph.2.8. Tit.3.5.*

Fourthly, Another Doctrine of the Law, or of the Jewish Doctours concerning Justification was, that admitting all Men to be sinners, and God to justify them with consideration of the perfect Righteousness and Sacrifice of the *Messias*, and that this *Messias* was Jesus of *Nazareth*, and that none of their own qualities and performances, were truly meritorious of so great a favour from God: yet the necessary qualification or condition of Justification to all Men, those at least to whom the Mosai- cal Law was made known, was the observance of all the particular Commands of that Law. For that Law was certainly from God, and (as they deemed) never to be changed. Insomuch that the *Messias* himself, was not to abolish the least Title of it: but to cause it by his Authority and Power to be more punctually, and strictly observed. And here *St. Paul* had to do not only with the unconverted, but converted Jews also. For a multitude of them, who believed Jesus of *Nazareth* to be the true *Messias*, and remission of sins through his Name, yet were zealous of the Law of *Moses*, *Acts 21.20.* And such were the whole Sect of Christians, called
Naza-

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Nazarenes, as some of the Fathers report. They believed the *Messias* was not to change the Law, but to explain, confirm and command it.

This opinion of the Jews, *St. Paul* with much Zeal and Courage opposeth: And one of his Arguments, *Rom. 2.* four last Verses, is to this effect: If God justified sinners, *Abraham* and the Patriarchs, nay even you your selves, *Moses's* Disciples, upon the qualification of an obediential Temper and Disposition of Heart to the Commands of God in any instances, and howsoever he shall be pleased to declare them, and particularly those by *Moses* to you Jews, till the coming of the true *Messias*, to declare God's Will, and give Laws in his Name to all Men, granting you, that the Doers of the Law shall be justified, till that great Prophet the *Messias* shall come, *Rom. 2.* I say if this be so, as I have proved in the Case of *Abraham*, and the Patriarchs; then, why may not God now also, since the *Messias* is come, even *Jesus of Nazareth*, invincibly proved to be the Person by Prophecies, Miracles, Resurrection, Ascension, Mission of the Holy Ghost, justify all Sinners, Jews and Gentiles upon the same condition of a Religious disposition of heart, exerting it self in

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Obedience to his Will and Laws declared by this Jesus of *Nazareth* the true *Messias*? Why may not God make an alteration in the particular Condition of his Favour, *i.e.* his particular Laws, the general one, an obediential and pious Temper and Disposition of Soul to God, and consequently to what is right and just remaining always the same? why may he not do it now by the *Messias* after *Moses*, as he did by *Moses*, after all the Holy Men before *Abraham*, and the Patriarchs your Ancestours? why may not God make the *Messias* the Messenger of his Will and Pleasure, with Alteration, Addition, Abolition, &c. as well as *Moses*? And such I believe to be the purport of that obscure and unusual way of speaking to our Ears, but perfectly of Jewish Style, *Rom. 10. v. 5. Say not, &c. Moses* (saith *St. Paul*) did say indeed, and that from God, that the man which obeyed God's Law by him should live, *i.e.* have his Favour and Blessing. But now the same God saith by Jesus the Christ, and by us his Apostles, that he hath sent the *Messias*, even this Jesus, the great Prophet foretold and promised even to you, and that if we believe and profess him to be the Christ, and consequently be obedient to, and hear him in the Name of God,

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we shall be saved. Or in short Terms : God indeed did formerly command you if you would be happy to obey *Moses* in his Name ; now he commands you to obey Jesus the Christ himself, sent now by him to you and all mankind. Before the Coming and Appearance of Jesus the true *Messias*, the Condition of Justification to you Jews was, Believe in *Moses*, to be the Disciples of *Moses*, and the Observance of the Laws of *Moses* ; but now both to Jew and Gentile, and all to whom Jesus is preached, the Condition is, believing in Jesus, becoming his Disciples, observing his Laws, and keeping his Words. It will not be amiss a little to paraphrase these few Verses, to make the sense of the Apostle ease and clear, beginning at the second Verse. “ I believe (saith St. Paul) “ and openly declare it, that many of my “ Brethren, the Jews, are truly zealous for “ God’s Honour, and their Duty. But “ they are unhappily at this time, ignorant and mistaken in both. They do “ not think of, or rightly conceive God’s “ way of Justification ; part of which is, “ doing it upon consideration of the perfect Righteousness, and voluntary Oblation of Jesus of *Nazareth*, the true *Messias* ; and this ever was, and ever will be, “ from

“ from the beginning to the end of man-
 “ kind. So is also another part of it, *viz.*
 “ the general Condition and Qualification
 “ in us for it; namely, a pious and religi-
 “ ous Temper of Heart to God : But the
 “ Application of this general Condition is
 “ new, namely, Obedience to the parti-
 “ cular Laws of God by Jesus Christ, with-
 “ out any regard to the Laws of *Moses*,
 “ any further than they are, according to
 “ his primitive and universal Laws of Rea-
 “ son and Nature, or repeated, allowed,
 “ and confirmed by this Jesus:

“ And being thus ignorant of God’s
 “ Method of Justification, they go about
 “ to continue and establish their own way
 “ without Jesus Christ, and will have the
 “ particular Observance of the Laws given
 “ by *Moses* to be necessary, and which they
 “ still imagine and believe now and ever
 “ to the End of the World ought to be re-
 “ tained. But they ought to know, that
 “ now Jesus Christ is come, he hath put
 “ an end to the Law of *Moses*. All who
 “ believe him to be the *Messias* (and all
 “ should to whom he is preached) are to
 “ have no more regard to *Moses*, as their
 “ Legislator and Master now, but to Je-
 “ sus, irrefragably proved and demonstra-
 “ ted to be the true *Messias*. *Moses* did say,
 “ and

“ and truly in his time (and for so long
 “ time as it pleased God, *i. e.* to the Re-
 “ velation of the *Messias*) that if the Jews
 “ his People hoped for God’s Blessing, Fa-
 “ vour and Reward, they must be of an
 “ obsequious and obedient Heart to God,
 “ and with reverence observe those Laws
 “ in particular, which God had most evi-
 “ dently commanded *Moses* to describe
 “ and enjoyn them, as a Condition there-
 “ of: But now Jesus the *Messias* hath been
 “ sent from God to you, and all Man-
 “ kind, with infinitely greater proof of
 “ his Mission from God, than ever *Moses*
 “ was; both he, and we commanded by
 “ him, teach and preach that all Men who
 “ shall hear our Doctrine, and have op-
 “ portunity of sufficient instruction in it,
 “ are not in the least to doubt, (it being
 “ an exceeding manifest and plain thing)
 “ but that this Jesus is this *Messias*; but
 “ are to believe it firmly, and profess it
 “ boldly, and consequently to become his
 “ Disciples, particularly shewing their Pie-
 “ ty to God, and their most religious Dis-
 “ position of Heart, Submission and Obe-
 “ dience to him, by the Observance of his
 “ Will and Laws by this Jesus the Christ,
 “ if they intend to be saved. Obedience
 “ to God by *Moses* was, now Obedience
 “ to

“ to Jesus Christ is, and ever hence-forward
 “ will be (as the Jews falsly imagine con-
 “ cerning their Law) the Condition of, and
 “ Qualification for the Divine Favour, Ju-
 “ stification, Remission of Sins, and final-
 “ ly Salvation. Such may be the Sense
 of *St. Paul*, so we may suppose him to
 have spoken to us in those obscure words.

The only thing of moment which the
 Jews had to object, and which converted
 and unconverted to Christianity were very
 fond of, was the perpetuity of the Law of
Moses, clearly as they thought affirmed in
 their Law and Prophets. But this *St. Paul*
 every where absolutely denies with the
 rest of the Apostles, and with great rea-
 son. For besides that that Law is impossi-
 ble to be observed by all mankind; neither
Moses himself, nor any of the Prophets
 ever affirmed it. Nay, they have intima-
 ted the contrary, *Jer. 31. 31.* with *Heb. 8.*
Moses himself promiseth the Jews, *That*
the Lord their God would raise up a Pro-
phet like him, whom they should hear,
Deut. 18. with *Acts 7.* This, as it may pro-
 mise a Succession of Prophets, so it had a
 principal Respect to the *Messias*, who was a
 Person sent immediately from God with
 larger Authority than *Moses*, and to be
 heard by them: Not as they too meanly
 thought

thought of him, as if he were to be only the Servant and second of *Moses*. No, he was to be a Law-giver from God like *Moses*, and to take and leave what he thought fit in his Law. And so the Prophecy is only compleatly fulfilled in the *Messias*. None of the Prophets were so like *Moses* as he.

The *Messias*, only, was a Legislator from God like *Moses*. 'Tis true, none of the Talmudists, Paraphrasts or Rabbins, that I remember, have apply'd this place to the *Messias*; but neither have they done that by many other places where they fairly might, and with much more reason than where oft-times they have.

But it is enough, if *Moses* and the Prophets, never really and in truth affirmed the perpetual Duration of the Law. For now God hath given abundantly more ample Proof of his Mission of Jesus, than ever he did of *Moses*; by his Doctrine, Life, Miracles, Resurrection, Ascension; Mission of the Holy Ghost upon them who believed in Jesus, and not upon the Jews: and from this Jesus, I have learned (saith St. Paul) that a great part of the Mosaical Law should be abolished; principally in order to the uniting all Mankind into one Body by Religion; That Circum-

cision

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cision and Uncircumcision now availeth nothing (to Justification) but Faith working by Love: A religious and obedient Heart to God by Jesus Christ, producing all the substantial Actions of Piety and Charity to God and our Neighbour, the summ and end even of the Mosaical Law it self; that no man who now believeth in Jesus ought to oblige himself, by Circumcision, to the observance of all the little temporary, and now useles things of the Mosaical Law. Nay, if he doth, Christ shall profit him nothing, as being disobedient to one expresse Command of Christ, liberty and freedom from that comparatively mean institution. Such then is the fourth false Doctrine of the Jews concerning Justification.

Fifthly and *lastly*, In few words: The Jewish Doctors taught, that they might perform and fulfill all the Commandments of their Law, by their own natural Strength and Power (*e*), but *St. Paul*, and the Divine Writers, teach a contrary Doctrine; *viz.* That the grace of God is absolutely necessary for our performance of good Works, or rather for being good men; the Condition of our Acceptance and Justification (*f*).

These are all of the most considerable Opinions and Doctrines of the Jewish Doctors, or Expounders of the Mosai- cal Law concerning Justification, that I at present remember. Now all these Do-ctrines of the Jewish Doctors put together, are the *Justification by the Law, or the Works of the Law*, as I conceive. Which, in not many words, are to this effect. Some men needed no Justification, but those who did, were justified without any Merits but their own; viz. for the due Observance of the Law of *Moses*, by their own Strength, Care and Industry.

Justification then by Faith, or according to the Christian Doctrine, as opposed to the Law, must be on the contrary. That all men being sinners are justified, and particularly receive remission of sins, the Holy Spirit and Everlasting Salvation, from the free and undeserved goodness of God, upon the consideration of the perfect Righteousness, and the meritorious Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and upon the Condition or Qualification of a pious Temper of Heart for the future, to obey the Will of God, (and consequently to do the thing that is right and just) howsoever he shall be pleased to declare it; but particularly by the Lord Jesus Christ; which very Condition

too we had never been able to perform, without the assistance of the grace of God. This, as I think, may be the comprehensive Sense of Justification by Faith ; but if it should prove otherwise, it is but a mistake in the signification of a Phrase, I confess obscurely enough delivered to us now at this distance of time, and of so different a way of speaking from the Apostolical Age. However that be, certain it is, that the Doctrine it self is taken out of, and according to the Holy Scriptures ; in which I see nothing but what is plain, easie and reasonable. After this, we may in very short observe, that if any of the three Senses of *justifying faith* mentioned, *viz.* A general Piety, or a Christian Obedience, or according to the Christian Doctrine, be that of the Holy Scripture, then justifying Faith is not a meer assent to the whole Doctrine of the Gospel ; nor, *Secondly*, is it a bare reliance upon God and Christ, and trust in their promises ; or as others express it, a rolling and throwing our selves upon Christ, for pardon and salvation ; nor, *Thirdly*, is it a confident persuasion, that our sins are pardoned in Jesus Christ ; nor, *Fourthly*, is it whatsoever men have confusedly meant by those Metaphors of going to Christ, or embracing

cing Christ, or eying him by Faith as an instrument; as if such a thin *veils* or Exile Relation of Faith were a thing for which Faith should be so much predicated, and to which no less than Justification, and Eternal Salvation should be attributed. Besides, if Faith should thus justify, because it apprehends, takes hold of, and embraces Christ, how much more should love be said to do it; which more properly may be said to take hold of, and embrace Christ.

Finally, There is no mention in the Scripture of Faith's justifying or saving, as such a kind of instrument, nor of any thing which infers it, or would so much as give any hint or suspicion of it; but as a necessary Condition or Qualification every where, in the same manner as Repentance, Obedience, Confession of Sins, and believing him to be raised from the Dead, *Rom. 10. 9, 10.* Both these last are Synecdochically taken, for being true Christians, or Obedience to God by Jesus Christ.

These notions, I conceive, have been invented and received principally in opposition to the Pontifical sense; and then, for want of the knowledge of the Oriental way of speaking, or from former prejudices.

judices. Such notions and language would have seemed very strange and unintelligible to the Greek, the Roman, and especially the Jew, the Adversary of *St. Paul*, whom he endeavours to convince and confute, and when understood very mean and improbable. And yet there may be truth under all these expressions, if they be taken figuratively with some sort of explanation; and we may be so charitable as to believe, that pious and good Men have so understood them; and that others sometimes can better tell, and explain their thoughts, than they themselves. As for example, if we take Faith first strictly for an Assent, but then add, so firm, repeated, attentive and deliberate an one, like that of *Thomas*, as to produce in us profound veneration and submission of Soul to God and Christ, and an actual Obedience to their Will and Commands, and consequently a true Vertue and real Sanctity of Heart and Life; I say, if this be the Sense of justifying Faith, it is true and good; and so if believing and relying upon Christ, and trust in him for pardon of sin and acceptance, be not a presumptuous one, but well grounded upon a true Repentance, the real Change and Conversion of the Heart, and supposing

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and comprehending that, it may pass for a justifying Faith. So may receiving and embracing whole Christ, as they phrase it, as King, Priest and Prophet; because it includes Obedience to Christ's Laws as a King. And on the other hand, to receive Christ as a Priest and Prophet may be included in Obedience, because we are commanded to believe Christ's Doctrine, and to trust in God for the remission of sins procured by him upon repentance; finally, when they call their justifying Faith a *lively Faith*, or Faith working by love, and bringing forth the Fruits of Holiness and good Works, it may do very well; tho' it is an odd kind of expression of what some contend for, That Faith alone justifies without Works or Obedience; which is like as if a Man should say, That the Root and the Fruit of a Tree nourisheth, to signify that the Root only doth it.

We have now gone through the explication of the words promised. For the application of them, let the Apostles own inference suffice at present, to recommend unto us a justified State. *We that are justified by Faith* (saith the Apostle) *have peace with God*; that is, we are in a State of Amity and Friendship with God; so that, we not only have no reason to fear any

any harm from that Terrible and Almighty Power, which the Confederation of all Heaven and Earth cannot secure us from : but we have all reason to hope for, and be assured of all Instances of Favour and Bounty, which his infinite Wisdom shall think fit, more and greater than we can conceive. What can intercept or restrain his Magnificent goodness to his Friends whom he delights in, and delights to honour ? And then our Consciences will not terrify us, or make us uneasie with Menaces or Suspensions of our Guilt, and his Justice one Day, and drive us from all thoughts of God. But on the contrary, they will invite, encourage, command us to make use of him, to make him our Refuge, our Trust, our Solace in all Conditions at all times. Then, when all the World, as kindly as it may now look upon us, shall neglect us, or forsake us, or hate us, or (which is certain to come to pass sooner or later) shall not be able in the least to help us though it would ; then when Death shall enslave and summon us to an appearance before that Sovereign Tribunal, and when we shall stand there to receive our final Doom, and irreversible Sentence.

Oh, most desirable and happy of all Conditions! without the assurance of which if we would draw our Curtains about us, and be serious but one hour, we could not be quiet or easie in our selves. We proclaim the Person most happy and fortunate, who hath the Eye, the Ear, the Heart of a Prince; but what can the greatest Potentates do for us more, than heap upon us Riches and Honors for a few Days; which many to one we had better have wanted. Even the continuance of bodily Life and Health, the greatest bodily Blessings are out of their Power; but how much more the goods of the mind, and the Treasures of Heaven. Whereas the Eternal Sovereign Lord of the Universe, hath all things perfectly at his own disposal, to bestow upon whom he pleaseth; and that here with the Wisdom and Care of a Father, but hereafter certainly Fullness of Joy and Pleasures for ever more. Besides, where God fixes his Affection, and vouchsafes his Friendship, we are sure there is true Worth, and something of real and good Value, though of his own gift; when Earthly greatness through ignorance, misinformation, humour or necessity may misplace them.

And

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And the belief of, and reflection upon God's Approbation, who is the best Judge, is at all times extreamly gratefull and satisfactory to us naturally. This is certain, that a wise and just Man takes more pleasure in not being unworthy of Favour which he doth not enjoy ; than in enjoying what he doth not deserve. We conclude all in turning St. *Paul's* Doctrine and Inference into an exhortation and motive. Let us use our utmost Care and Endeavour on our part, and God will not fail to perform what is to be done on his, to get into the Number of those who are Evangelically justified ; our Sins pardoned, our Souls inhabited and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and our Eternal Salvation assured ; that so we may enjoy the great Honour, and the unspeakable Comfort of being the Friends of God, and at peace with him through our Lord Jesus Christ.

To whom with the Father, and Holy Spirit, be all Honour, and Praise, both now and for evermore. Amen.

Anna.



Annotations and Additions

On the *Discourse* of

Justification.

(a) **F**OR the ample Proof of the Notion and Sense of δικαιο, δικαιοσύνη and δικαιοσύνη sometimes, which I have given, I think what follows will be abundantly sufficient.

(1) Let it be premised, that though δικαιο in its most precise Notion, signifies to pronounce just, to discharge, acquit and absolve from Fault and Punishment; yet in its more general Use, it signifies more generally, *Viz.* to treat, or use as just, in our Opinions, Words or Actions; and this, because they are always, or ought to be conjoined; and because that the pronouncing just is for that very End, that a Person may be so dealt with, and used in all the above-named Respects.

This

This is most ordinary in all Languages, and particularly, 1 *Kings* 8. 32. δικαιώσας δικαίον, and δύναι αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ, are of the same importance.

(2) It is certain, that the word δικαιόω in the Septuagint, Apocryphal Books, and the New Testament, in above twenty Places, signifies our Sense. For Example, we may consult these, *Gen.* 44. 16. *Exod.* 23. 7. *Deut.* 25. 1. 1 *King.* 8. 32. *Jes.* 5. 23. and 50. 8. *Prov.* 17. 15. &c. In two or three Places, (2 *Sam.* 15. 4. *Mic.* 7. 9. *Psal.* 81. 3.) it signifies to judge or give sentence, either on the good or bad side, but rather on the good, and then it answers to be Hebrew words, שפט and ריב. Twice it signifies to be just neutrally, not to make just actively, *Gen.* 38. 26. *Psal.* 19. 10. In one or two places it may be equally taken in our sense, or the Pontifician, of making just. Finally, in two places only, the Pontifician and Socinian sense cannot be denied, viz. *Psal.* 73. and *Apoc.* 22. but that may very well happen, because it answering to the Hebrew, הוציך, the grammatical Force of that Conjugation may take place so rarely. But the sense of a word, surely, is to be taken from its most common use; from twenty places, rather than one or two.

(3) The

(3) The Hebrew word, הצדיק, to which *δικαιωσις* answers in the Septuagint, manifestly signifies our sense of Justification in above twenty places: Nor can *Bellarmino*, or any other, find any more than two places, where it is used in their sense of making righteous. The one is *Jes. 53. 11.* *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.* But the Forensic sense seems there more proper, because it follows, *for he shall bear their iniquities.* My righteous Servant shall bring many into a Condition of Grace and Favour with God, by his bearing their Iniquities; the Chal. Paraph. here useth the word, מוכי, which generally signifies forensically, and *R. Selom.* gives the same sense. The other place which *Bellarmino* quotes is, *Dan. 12. 3.* *they that turn many unto righteousness,* מצדיקי הרבים. But the Septuagint otherwise read the Hebrew Copy, viz. for מצדיקי they read מצדיקים, rendring it ἀπὸ δικαιοσύνης πολλῶν. But suppose this reading doth not give so good a sense, and finally, granting this single Instance of הצדיק signifying Justification, or making righteous, is there any proportion between one place and twenty, to determine the otherwise dubious signification of a Word?

(4) The

(4) The Chaldee, Syriack and Rabbinical words which interpret the Hebrew, *הצדיק* and the Hellenistical *δικαίω*, are certainly much oftner used in the forensick Sense, such as are *אורכי נתרכי אתרכי וכי וכה*, as any one will find who reads the Targums. The Syriack Version and the Talmudists and Rabbins, particularly the Treatise Sanhedrim.

(5) The opposite Hebrew word to *הצדיק*, *viz.* *הרשיע*, most commonly signifies to condemn, or to afflict, vex, use ill, as wicked men are wont, and ought to be used. This signification we may find above twenty times in the Old Testament; and the last particularly, *1 Sam. 14. 47.* but it never signifies to make a Man wicked in a double active Sense.

(6) This sense we have given is plainly to be collected out of the Apostle St. Paul's own words, compared. Thus, *Rom. 5. 9.* justified by his Blood, *δικαιωθέντες ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ*, is the same sense with that in Verse 10. We have been reconciled by the Death of his Son, *καταλλάγημεν διὰ τοῦ θανάτου υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ*. Justification and Reconciliation were the same, *viz.* to be restored to Grace and Favour with God; to be delivered from punishment for sin, and to be used generally by God, as those use to be,
to

to whom he is favourable and kind, as he always certainly is to a just Man.

Again, *Rom. 4.* from the 2^d. to the 9th. Verse, it is manifest that δικαιῆσαι, *to be justified*, and δικαιῶν *to justify*, are of the same meaning, with having Faith, λογίζομένην εἰς δικαιοσύνην, imputed for righteousness, and λογίζεσθαι εἰς δικαιοσύνην, to impute for righteousness: But the phrase of imputing for righteousness, &c. is of the same importance with ἄρεσις and ἑπικάλυψις ἁμαρτιῶν, the remission and covering of sins. Therefore δικαιῶν is of the same importance too. And what is remission of sins, or to be freed from punishment for them, but only one instance of the more general divine Favour, and of being used and regarded by God, as a good and just Man uleth to be? Finally, *Rom. 4. 16. 18.* κατὰκριμα and δικάσιμα and δικάσιος, Condemnation and justification are opposed, therefore what is the sense of κατὰκριμα which no doubt, is the judging, pronouncing, and treating a Man as wicked: such, on the contrary, must be the sense of δικάσιος.

I think therefore enough is here said to establish, and fix the notion of δικαιῶν, or *to justify*, when conjoined with the word *Faith*.

(7) There is abundant proof of this out of their own Writings most ancient; nor is it to be doubted, but that the general Opinions of their Doctors in our Saviour's time, were the same with those we now find among them, especially who were nearest to it. In the Treatise, *Sanh. cap. 6. Misna 2.* Expiation of sin, and a portion in the World to come, as they speak, is attributed to Confession, from the Example of *Achan*. It is without doubt, they supposed Repentance too, as they expressly mention in the next quotation.

By which we may see, how Judaical that Synecdochical way of speaking is used also by *St. Paul, Rom. 10. 9, 10.* If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth*, &c. In the *Gemara* of *Cod. Joma. cap. 8.* we have two leaves filled with the Elogies of Repentance. Among other things, they say, that there are three divisions or kinds of Expiation, with each of which Repentance is to be joined. If any one should sin against an affirmative Precept, Repentance alone would be sufficient for Expiation: But if against a negative one, then Repentance suspended the Punishment, till the Day of Expiation expiated it. If any one committed a sin which deserved Excision, or Death by the hands of the Magistrate, then

then Repentance and the Day of Expiation did only suspend Punishment, till Affliction and Chastisements expiated and wiped away Guilt and Punishment, (I suppose.) Finally, if any had been guilty of Blasphemy against the Name of God, nothing could expiate but corporal Death.

In the same place, they tell us, that Repentance was so great and excellent a thing, that by its Vertue, even sins of presumption [במור] *i. e.* of the most hainous and atrocious Nature, became merits. In the *Gemara* of *Rosch haschanah*, cap. 1. fol. 17. 2. and 18. 1. Repentance is said to undo and rescind the very Decree of Judgment; And the iniquity of the House of *Eli*, not to be expiated by Sacrifices or oblations, but בתורה and גמילות חסדים by the Law and the Retributions of pious Men, or of the Saints, *i. e.* by Alms and Works of choice and Charity. The sense of the phrase בתורה, or, *by the Law*, seems to be either by the reading or studying of the Law, as they elsewhere commonly speak; or by the diligent general Practice of the Law, and Observation of it, or of its Commands. And that of Retribution of the Saints, or of the Religious, signifies more than Observation of Command, *viz.* Works of Charity, Goodness, Bounty, Liberality, beyond what is
P by

by any Divine Law required or due. Now it was by both these for the future, not by the first only, that they say the Iniquities of *Elis House*, were to be expiated. See also *Windet de vitâ sanctorum statâ*, pag. 193.

We may here fitly observe, that the phrase of *התכפר בתורה* to be expiated, or purged by the Law, expresseth part of *St. Paul's* *δικαιοσύνην ἐκ νόμου* and *διὰ νόμου* and *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου*, which he peremptorily denies to expiate sin, as he doth also the other of their Works of Liberality and Charity. He denies it, I say, not as a Condition, but as meritorious of God's Favour and Forgiveness: For we ought here further to observe, that in these quotations, two of the Jewish Opinions concerning Justification are contained. The one the needlessness or exclusion of the consideration, or regard to the Merits of any other, even of the *Messias* himself, least of all to the Sacrifice of him; which, they deeming him to be a great Prince to subjugate all Nations, abhorred. The other, that their own good Works both of Duty and Choice, of Precept and Charity, were abundantly meritorious, and by their Worth and Merit did expiate all their sins, and oblige God in Justice to forgive them, and

and receive them into his Favour again; of which more in the next particular. Wee'll here add somewhat more. In the Author of *Eccles. Cap. 18. 22.* there is a footstep of expiation of sin by corporal Death, *Defer not* (saith that Author) *till Death to be justified.* And then for Alms or Works of Charity, how much the Jews attribute to them, we may abundantly learn from the Talmudists, and Apocryphal Authors. See *Bav. Bath. Cap. 1.* fol. 8, 9, 10, 11. in *Gemara*; we read also *Ecclus. 3. 30.* ἐλεημοσύνη ἐξηλάττειται ἁμαρτίαν *Alms make an atonement for sin.* And *Tob. 12. 9.* ἐλεημοσύνη γὰρ ἐκ θανάτου ῥύεται, καὶ αὐτὴ ἀποκαθαρίζει πάντα ἁμαρτίαν, for Alms doth deliver from Death, and shall purge away all sin. The Holy Authors of the New Testament, never exprels themselves in such manner; but always attribute expiation of sin to Jesus Christ, no doubt, as a Sacrifice and a meritorious one, by his voluntary oblation of himself. So *St. Paul, Rom. 3. 25.* calls Jesus Christ ἱλαστήριον, a propitiation, and *Titus 3. 5.* ἐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς, &c. not by Works of or by Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And

John 1. 7. τὸ αἷμα τοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάντων ἁμαρτιῶν. The Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin; in the forensick Sense it is to be confessed, that some places in the Canonical Scriptures, might give occasion to this opinion of the Jews: Such as *Prov.* 16.6. *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged*, in the Hebrew יכפר עין וחסד ואמת, by them iniquity shall be expiated, as it is always said of Sacrifices: And in the Septuagint ἐλεημοσύναις καὶ πίστει ἀποκαθαίρονται αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. And so *Prov.* 10.2. and 11.4. Righteousness delivereth from Death, where δικαιοσύνη, Righteousness, is most probably to be taken in the Hellenistical Sense, for *Alms*. Because it is in both places opposed to Treasures and Riches, which profit nothing in the Day of Wrath. But most probable it is, that what the Canonical Writers, and Apocryphal too, perhaps looked upon as a condition and qualification only, for Forgiveness and Divine Favour, the Jews of the following Ages so mistook them, as to stretch it to an Obligation of Justice upon God, as much as upon a Master to pay his Servant his Wages, or a Debtor his Creditor. They improved their Repentance and good Works, their observance of their Law, and their

their Works of free Choice, as Alms, &c. to a proper and strict Merit; as some sort of Christians do their Repentance, and sometimes that only which they call Penance. Nor are we to think, that they extended the effect of their Merit no farther than this corporal Life. For they tell us, it reached the future Life too. In their Talmudical Tract, *Bav. Bath.* before quoted (*fol. 10. 1.*) The question is asked why it is twice said (*Prov. 10. 2.* and *11. 4.*) That Righteousness delivereth from Death. The Answer is, because it delivereth from two kinds of Death; from a violent Death [here], and from the Judgment of Hell.

(c) Those who seem to have thought so were but few, and of some extraordinary Sagacity, or perhaps there might have been a touch of Revelation or Inspiration. Nor do we know what, or how many thoughts may by such means first come into the minds of men. The generality of their Doctors thought of no such thing, nor make any mention of the Merits of the *Messias*. Nor did those few speak of it as necessary or certain, and then they restrained the Privilege to their own Nation, and People. Finally, they say nothing who this *Messias* was, and it is certain the Apostles Adversaries, the Bulk of the Jewish

Doctors denied Jesus of *Nazareth* to be him. Who these Ancient Jewish Authors were, some of them see in the Preface to the first Volume of *Lightfoot*, pag. 14, 15. and *L'empereur's* Annotations on *Jach.* on *Dan.* 9. which is enough to let a Jew see, how far a Jew may go in believing this Christian Doctrine.

(d) The ancient wise Men (saith *Maïem. Comm.* on *Pir. Anoth. Cap.* 4. par. 5.) who taught the Law *Gratis*, without any reward, were believers of God, and the Law [אשר בה יוכה אדם לחיי העולם הבא] by which a Man merits the Life of the World to come; and again, *parag.* 16. Let a man get those Vertues here, by which he may merit the World to come. See also *pir. Anoth. cap.* 6.

And to prevent the Objection that the word, וְכָה, which I render to merit or deserve, signifies no more than to obtain, as some have said of the word *mereri*, used by the Latin Fathers; we may observe, that that is signified more fitly by the word יָקַח in the former part of the Sentence. And if the Author had meant no more, he had used the same word. But it is sufficiently known to those, that are acquainted with the Talmudical and Rabbinical Language, that properly and strictly to

to merit by being Righteous and Just, is the first signification of the word זכר.

In the Targums of *Jon.* and *Hieros. Gen. 22.* *Abraham* is brought in praying to God. That when the Sons of *Isaac* were in straits and distress, and made their Address to God, they might have deliverance and remission of their sins, for the meritorious Piety of *Isaac* their Father, in submitting himself voluntarily to be bound, and offered by his Father *Abraham*. And *Psalms* 60. 7. the *Chal. parap.* introduceth *David* praying for the sake of the Truth of *Abraham*, the Righteousness of *Isaac*, and the Piety, חסידות, of *Jacob*.

And in *Targ. Cantic.* 1. 9. The passage of the *Israelites* through the Red-sea, is attributed to the Merits of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*.

'Tis true, the Holy Scripture it self telleth us, that God did oft-times do good to Men, yea, and forgive some punishments of some sins, for the sake, and at the request of some other eminently, holy and righteous Man; (so *Pharaoh's* Steward was blessed for *Joseph's* sake; the *Israelites* at *Moses's* humble Request were spared; the *Sodomites* for ten Righteous Persons at the request of *Abraham*, had escaped that dreadful Destruction) and we believe he doth

so still. But the Jewish opinion extends this privilege of good men beyond its bounds, even to the utmost. They expected all punishment for all sins here and hereafter, to be remitted for their sakes. What we Christians are taught, to be the just and due honour only of the *Messias*, even Jesus of *Nazareth*. Besides, we believe, that this very great favour afforded to the best of Men, is bestowed upon them for the sake of Jesus the Christ, which the Jews never thought of.

In their own Books it is common, that all *Israel* shall have a portion in the World to come, that not one of them shall perish, or go to Hell, except Apostates, and such who deny some fundamental Articles of their Religion, otherwise wicked enough.

So we find it in the Treatise *Sanhedrin. cap. II. mishn. I. & 4*. I know they do not all say just the same things in this matter, as well as in others: But from their own Books, and the Scripture it seems most probable, that the Generality of the Doctors and People did believe that their very relation to *Abraham*, and being the Disciples of *Moses*, did deserve very good usage from God. Much more surely, their external Penances, and strict Observance of their Law. The Holy Scripture confirms
all

all this. For in *Jes. cap. 58.* we read, there were those who challenged God's Favour for their meer external performances; and in the Evangelists how much did they vaunt themselves, for being the Children of *Abraham*, and the Disciples of *Moses*?

Moses himself seems to intimate, what an insolent and arrogant People they were, and would prove, *Deut. 9. 4.* when he tells them, that they were rather worse than other Nations, and that God's Choice of them, was only from his own free Goodness.

(e) We do not, as I remember, meet with any acknowledgment of Divine Grace, any supervenient additional Influence or Assistance, either in the Scripture, or in their own Writings, as necessary to Repentance, Reformation, or becoming a good Man, by any Pharisaical Jew, such as *St. Paul* disputes against?

And it seems to me the most genuine Sense of that known and ancient saying amongst them כל בירי שמים חוצ מראת השם *i.e.* all things are in the Power and disposal of Heaven, except the fear of God. The sense I take to be that, *that dependeth not at all upon God's Will, not solely on God's Will,* as *Men. Ben. Israel* expounds it. A Man may do it, or not do

*Conc. ad
Exod. 7. 3.*

it

it merely of himself, by his own natural Power; if God hinder it not, that is enough.

It is true, there may be met with in some of their Prayers extant among them, a Petition for God's help to keep his Commandments, to serve him and keep them from sin, but not as *necessary*, without which they could not perform it. So we find in their Office for the Day of
מחזור *fol. 77* Expiation, יום כפור, that God would purifie their Hearts to serve him, that it would please God they might not sin. But it is more than I know, if they any where use it as an Argument for this their Prayer, that they cannot possibly obtain those their Desires, without God's special help and aid. We meet with no such expressions among them, as, *We who cannot do any thing that is good without thee.* And again, *for as much as without thee we are not able to please thee,* and many such like in our own Liturgy.

This opinion of their natural strength sufficient (like Pelagianism so called amongst us) to repent and be converted, might induce them to their opinion about Merit; though indeed it was no sufficient proof, supposing it true. For what if they had so much Power of Nature left, whence had

had they it? was it their own originally? did they give it themselves? or was it not the gift of God who made them? did not God continue this natural Power, and the Liberty of using it? But such thoughts and reasonings, never came into the head of a Scribe, Lawyer, or Pharisee.

(f) Every where in the Scripture, but more especially in the Epistles, Sanctification, Regeneration, Renovation, Salvation, &c. are ascribed to God and the Holy Spirit, the beginning and improvements of goodness in us, and of the spiritual life, are attributed to the grace or influence of God, preventing, concurring, exciting, strengthening our Resolutions and Endeavours. So as to give us to understand, that a Man cannot reform or convert himself without God, and that God will not without himself, ordinarily speaking, for God no doubt can, and hath irresistibly and physically (as they speak) converted some, (such as *St. Paul*) for eminent Examples of the Power of Divine Grace, when God pleaseth, and particularly when he designeth a Person for some present, great and special Service. Mans nature, as it is now corrupted, cannot recover the Rule and Dominion of Reason, Conscience, Vertue and Goodness in his Soul, without
the

the powerfull Aid of Divine Grace; tho' when it is offered, it may refuse it too. Such places are, *Eph. 2. 8, 9, 10. By grace are ye saved, &c. not of works least any man should boast, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works: And Tit. 3. 5. Not by works of Righteousness which we have done, &c. but by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 8. 13. If ye through the spirit mortifie the deeds of the flesh. Most plainly, Phil. 2. 12. Work out your own salvation; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Nay, the same Doctrine may seem fairly intimated, in several Places of the Old Testament, as Deut. 30. 16. God promiseth to circumcise the hearts of the Israelites, and their Posterity, &c. where we may observe a spiritual promise in the body of the Law. And Jerem. 13. 23. Can an *Æthiopian* change his skin, &c. and David prays in his penitential Psalm, that God would not take his holy Spirit from him, as (supposed) necessary to his perseverance, much more than to Repentance. Although it is to be acknowledged, that this Doctrine of the Necessity of Divine Grace, Influence and Operation, and especial Providence to make, and keep Men inwardly holy and good,*

good, was only reached by some of the Prophets, or most eminent Saints, or of a sublimer genius among the Jews; the generality never thinking of any such thing, and when by Christianity taught, denied by them. Nor was it scarce ever dreamt of among the Gentiles, except here and there a Philosopher or Poet may have dropt something that looks that way. But hardly any Doctrine more common and known in the Christian Church, where every Child learns it before its Letters. And certainly the Belief, and frequent Attention to so near, especially, and constant Presence of the Deity to the Souls of Men, as it is true, so is it many ways a great Cherisher of Piety and Religion.

It were to be wished that the Fathers, supposed by some to know best the mind of the Apostles, as being nearest to them, had enlightened us here in this obscurely to us delivered Doctrine. But these next of all to the Apostles, were content to speak simply, and little varying from the Apostolical words, *Clem. Epist. to the Cor. p. 41.*
Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν δια θελήματι αὐτοῦ ἐν χριστῷ
Ἰησοῦ κληθέντες, ἔ δι' ἐαυτῶν δικαιοσύνην, ἔ δι'
διὰ ἡμετέρας σοφίας, ἢ συνέσεως, ἢ εὐσεβείας, ἢ
ἔργων ὧν κατεργητάμεθα ἐν ὑπόκριτι καρδίᾳ·
ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς πίστεως δι' ἧς πάντας ἀπ' αἰῶ-

ὅτι ὁ πανταρχὸς ἐδικαίωσεν. And we therefore being called by the Will of God in Jesus Christ, are not justified by our own Wisdom, or Understanding, or Piety; or Works, which we have done in Sanctity of Heart; but by Faith, by which the Almighty hath ever justified all Men from the beginning, which differs little in words, nothing in sense, from the Apostle, *Rom. 4.* in the case of *Abraham*. And the Author to the *Hebrews*, Chap. 11. explain'd in the Discourse above.

But if we go further downward among the Fathers, I do not know whether we shall learn much concerning this point. Those who please may try themselves. *Just. Martyr* the Philosopher seems to me to have taken the Notion of it best, and *St. Augustine* and *St. Jerome* (in some places at least) though worst, with a prejudice and narrowness, common to Persons of Wit, Eloquence, and Zeal in their own Religion, especially when flourishing in Power and Reputation. Such a zeal in so truly excellent Religion as the Christian, even when mistaken, is pardonable: But more acceptable to the wiser sort of Men, when attended with Judgment, and a just regard to Truth. *St. Jerome* seems to have been a greater Master in the Language of the

the Jews, so far as Biblical Hebrew and Chaldee went, than in their Opinions, and their Books in which they are contained.

And though he may sometimes mention some-what he had learned in conversation with his Masters, as in his Epistle to *Al-gasia*, the Collection called *Misna* (as I think against *Morinus*) and a Custom or two of the Jews, and their opinion concerning *Melchisedeck*, in his Epistle to the Evangelists: Yet I do not know, (perhaps others may know better) whether he hath quoted any one Sentence out of any Jewish Book in its own Language. But without doubt there were enough of them in his time to have quoted, and which contained the same Opinions concerning Justification, which we have cited in these Annotations, and the Jews teach to this day. Or if *St. Jerome* had read such Books, it seems it was not in his thoughts to compare *St. Paul's* Doctrine in this matter with that of the Jews. Let any one read *St. Jerome* on *Gal. 3.* *St. Aug.* quæst. 80. quæst. 73. and *de spir. & litera ad Marcell.* and his Expof. of the Epistle to the *Gal.* and his Book *de fide & operibus*, and others. There may be some things very good now and then dropt: But generally what they say, is of such confused and uncertain Sense
(and

(and sometimes not true) that a man is little the better, but only to know that such men have said so.

I would not be here thought by this, to desire the Abatement of the just Esteem of so great a Name, as the Fathers. For I believe them to have been generally of exceeding Piety, and the greatest men of their Ages for knowledge; some in one thing, some in another, some in all; but it cannot be allowed that they were equal either in Philosophy, the true knowledge, and distance of the Natures of things, or in the skill of expounding and interpreting the Holy Scriptures, which this present Age by the good Providence of Almighty God doth enjoy. We shall, I think be very unjust to it, if we do not acknowledge so much. May the effect of this our advantage in knowledge be also our improvement, in a substantially religious and virtuous Temper and Practice; without which it is but diversion, not business; that which may please the Speculators, but profit nobody, and nothing mend the State of the World.

AD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

BY reason of the Affinity of the Subjects of *Justification* and *Satisfaction*; I had thoughts of adding a Discourse of this last, and that under these general Heads.

I. What was the Doctrine of the Scriptures concerning that which is so called, *viz. Satisfaction by the death and merits of Jesus Christ*?

II. What was the distinct Nature, Ends and Uses of a Sacrifice, and particularly of an Hylastick or Expiatory one?

III. How they operated, or what they contributed toward the procuring, securing, or recovering the Favour of God in general, and particularly that instance of his Favour, Remission of Sins upon Repentance, and how?

IV. Whether Jesus Christ dying, was not a proper Expiatory Sacrifice?

V. Whether he was not in many respects a more excellent Expiatory Sacrifice, than the Patriarchal or Mosaical?

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VI. What

VI. What is the true and distinct Notion of a Merit, and how the Merits of Jesus Christ might obtain in general, the Favour of God to sinfull Mankind, and particularly Remission of Sins to Penitents, and the reasonableness thereof?

VII. Whether the Act of God's forgiving Sins to penitent Sinners, in Consideration of the Sacrifice and Merits of Christ Jesus, instead of the Act of punishing them, might not be called properly, and according to the Original, and received use of the word *Satisfaction*, i. e. of as much value, of equal or more good Effects to the Community, or rather in the World which God governs.

In all which I think much would be said, which hath not been said before, or not so clearly and distinctly.

But this and something else, if God give life and health, may find another opportunity.

SER.

SERMON VI.

2 COR. V. 19.

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them.

IN these few words, we read the most important part of the Design of Christian Religion. The *Εὐαγγέλιον* indeed, the glad Tidings which the Gospel hath brought to the World. Now do we hear the joyfull News, and the best that ever founded in the Ears of Mankind. The Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, who is only able to save or destroy us Eternally, looks towards us with a Countenance full of Compassion and good Will.

Here we have the Completion of that Prophetical Hymn, sung at the Birth of the Great Jesus by a Choire of Angels. *Glory be to God on high, on Earth peace, good Will towards men,* and very fitly repeated

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by

by all hearty Christians, whose Minds are enlightned, and Hearts sensibly touched after the Communion in that Service, *i. e.* the sending of such a Person as the Ever-blessed Jesus, and with such a Design, would one Day redound to the Glory of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, both Heaven and Earth sounding aloud his Praises. It would also be peace on Earth, just Cause of unspeakable Comfort and Joy in all Men, who should hear the News, that the Eternal God, an infinite offended Majesty, did lay aside his frowns, and regard them with a serene and mercifull Countenance, or Peace on Earth, *i. e.* between all Mankind, Jew and Gentile, Greek, Barbarian and *Scythian*; there was now to be no Hatred, Contention, or Strangeness in respect of Religion. All were to be united in the Service of the same God and Lord. Christ, was to be the Peace, or Peacemaker, breaking down the Partition-wall. *Eph. 2.*

Finally good Will towards Men, in Consequence to God's gracious regard, what Acts of Grace and Favour might not Men then expect. Great were the Blessings and Benefits now, more especially, which God was preparing for the Sons of mortal and sinfull Men. Who ought to echo back the
Cele-

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Celestial Hymn in such words, as that of the Psalmist. *O sing unto the Lord a new Song, sing unto the Lord all the Earth; sing unto the Lord, bless his Name, shew forth his Salvation from day to day.* Ps. 96.1.

Most of the words in the Text, may afford us matter of excellent Observation. These five,

- I. The Act, Reconciling.
- II. The Author, God.
- III. The Parties, God and the World.
- IV. The Instrument, Christ.
- V. The principal Instance or Effect of this Reconciliation, (not the onely one)

Not imputing their Trespases unto them.

I. The Act, the Design, the Business to be done, *Reconciliation.*

This supposeth some Aversion and Enmity in the Parties to be reconciled, God and the World. The Parties were Enemies. This we ought a little to explain, and shew in Propriety of Speech,

(1) How man was God's Enemy, and (2) how God may be Man's. It needs not much explication or proof, that Mankind hath been, and in greatest part, still is, the Enemy of God. Enmity imports 2 things:

(1) A Contrariety of Nature and Will, (2) and more strictly, mischievous Designs,

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Intentions and Actions, according to ones Power. In both these respects Man was, and is generally, still the Enemy of God.

Rom. 7. 12. In the 7th Chapter to the *Romans*, is an excellent Comment upon this Enmity, between the Divine Nature and Laws, and the unregenerate Man; for in such Sense St. Paul speaks of himself. And the same Apostle tells us, *That the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh*, Gal. 5. 17.

The degenerate and regenerate Nature, are contrary one to the other, *Ephes. 4. 22.* *The old Man is corrupt, the new Man is created after God in Righteousness and true Holiness.* Most expressly and plainly, *Rom. 8. 7.* *The carnal mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* And the Gentiles (which were almost all the World, nor were the generality of the Jews inwardly much better) amongst other their abominable Qualities, are termed *Haters of God*. Thus we see how man is the Enemy of God. But how is God man's Enemy, *i. e.* sinfull and degenerate Man? (1) It must be acknowledged that God's Nature, Will, and Laws, are as contrary to Man's, as his is to God's. (2) That God hates a sinfull Nature as such (to speak after the manner of

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of men) infinitely more than the wicked Man doth the holy and pure Nature of God. A wicked man is not so perfectly, and in so high a Degree wicked and sinfull, as God is righteous and holy, and so it is every where exprest in the Scripture, God's Soul hates the wicked, *Prov. 15. 9.* It must be acknowledged, (3) that God often treats wicked Men, in some respects, as a Man useth to treat his Enemy. He punisheth and destroys them too, when irreclaimable. But then, more generally, he useth them like one, who beareth their Persons good Will: for he pities their blindness and perverseness, he bears them with the utmost Patience; In the midst of their highest Injuries and Provocations, he continues his Blessings corporal and spiritual; the good things of this Life oft-times in plenty, and the means of Repentance and Salvation, his word and spirit; He in kindness chastiseth them to the same purpose. All these are the Effects of his Benevolence, and love of good Will to them, even while Enemies.

Indeed, after all this, if they grow senseless, obdurate, and contemptuous. He oft-times makes them Examples in this World, however in the next. He utterly destroys them Body and Soul; not their Being, but

all for which it is desirable. But this Treatment proceeds not from any Malice in God against their Persons; but from Love and Care of the rest of his Creatures. It is only when it becomes necessary to the Government of the World; when wicked Men ought not to be any longer born; when their mischievous Impiety and Example becomes intolerable.

Thus we see the difference between wicked Men's Enmity to God, and God's to Men. On God's part what there is, is most just and necessary; but on Man's, horribly unjust. However an Enmity there is, but not irreconcilable. For God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself. And that's the

II. Thing: The Author, God. He began the Design immediately after the Apostacy and degeneracy of Man, and hath been ever since prosecuting of it, and that in or by Christ too, as we shall presently mention: and here we are to observe, that it is but one of the parties at Enmity, that design'd and endeavour'd a Reconciliation, and that is God.

Stupendious Goodness! God, an infinite Majesty, Sovereign of Heaven and Earth, desires a Reconciliation with man, the meanest of his own reasonable Creatures;
God,

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God, infinitely holy, wise and good; Man unholy, foolish and wicked: God neglected and forgotten, and most part wilfully, injuriously offended, and even insolently despis'd: Man, his unnatural and ungratefull Creature, and Off-spring.

Finally, God Omnipotent, who could have done himself right every Moment, crush'd this pitifull Worm to dirt, turn'd him out of Being, or into Eternal Misery; Man who could at his worst but have wrigled, turned up his blasphemous Mouth, and contemptible Head against Heaven (not without its permission neither) and finally perished in his inveterate Enmity against it.

'Tis this God, I say, who began, and still carries on the Design of Reconciliation, with this contemptible and perverse Enemy, Man: Even so far, as to beseech him to be friends, as it follows in the Verse after the Text. *Now then we are Embassadors for Christ* (and Christ is for God) for it is added, *as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled to God.* How canst thou hear such words, O man, and not presently fall down upon thy Knees, endeavouring to prevent, in appearance, such an indecent Condescension? And dost thou,

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O Heavenly Father, beseech me? is it not below thy infinite Majesty, to be a Suitor to a mean and sinfull Creature? shall a prodigal and rebellious Child suffer his wife, and good Father, to beg reconciliation at his hands? nay, surely, that part is mine, and only becomes me. *St. Peter* was so surpris'd with the Humility of *Jesus*, when he would wash his Disciples Feet, and so offended at it, that he was bold to say, He should never wash his, till our Saviour threatned him into a Submission, *John* 13. 8.

In like manner, a good Man, duly sensible of the infinite Distance between God and himself, and how the Case stands, may, at first sight, be tempted to think so great a Condescension of God, as Entreaties for Peace and Reconciliation with men, some-what undecent and unbecoming, if he himself had not expressly told us otherwise, and laid his Commands upon us, not to dispute his Wisdom.

But upon a little Enquiry, he would soon find it reasonable and necessary. For alas, as for a great part of Mankind, they were fallen into profound Ignorance of the true God, the Person to whom they were to be reconciled, and to whom they were Enemies in their minds by wicked Works,

Works, by their degenerate and corrupted Nature. And though they should have known him, and how the case stood between them, (as we through his great mercy do :) yet through Perverseness, Pride, Haughtiness and Licentiousness, natural and affected Delight in evil Temper and Practice, they would have refused his kind Offers, and not have given him the hearing ; like the Barbarous of Mankind, who will not be brought to a civil Life, but chuse to continue in Nastiness, Rudeness and Brutality, mortally hating all those, who would perswade them to change their manners. Insomuch, that it is one of the first steps of the most mercifull Author of Reconciliation, to bring Men to be willing to hear his Proposals, and to enter into a Treaty with him. That's the 2^d. thing observable in the words, the Author of this Reconciliation, *God. God was in Christ, &c.*

III. The third is the Parties to be reconciled, God and the World : And here we cannot omit particularly to observe two things: (1) the Goodness of God. Again, (2) his Condescension ; or, as I think I may be bold truly to call it, his *Humility*.

I. The Goodness of God, that he would be pleased to be reconciled at all, that he would

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would vouchsafe to take any course to remove the Enmity between himself and sinners ; that he would contrive and prosecute (to speak after the manner of men) such a design, that man first might have no unjust Enmity in his Nature against him, and then that there might be none in him against Man ; and that he might not be obliged by his Sanctity, Justice, and even Universal Goodness it self, to use him as an Enemy, that there might be settled and preserved, an hearty Amity and Correspondence between God and Man. But,

2. That which is here most proper, is God's gracious Condescension, or even *Humility*. Condescension to the lowest Acts of Goodness and Charity, where it doth not hinder greater, (as it doth not in God, who is always sufficient for all kinds and instances of it together) is one Branch of Humility ; and therefore God may be said, in a most proper Sense to be *humble*. The highest doth not think any Office of Goodness below him, because it is low, as oft-times proud Man doth. He feedeth the very young Ravens when they cry, and cloatheth the Lilies of the Field.

But there is another more general Notion of *Humility*, which may most truly be attri-

attributed to God himself, and that is, not to esteem or use any Power *ultimately* for it self, as to be feared or honoured for it.

This is the true general Notion of *Humility*; and then there is nothing more truly said, than that God is the most humble of all Beings. He doth nothing *merely and ultimately*, for the Ostentation and Exercise of his Power and Greatness: He values his Power only as directed by his Wisdom for the Ends of Goodness, as their Instrument of doing good. His Power over all his Creatures is necessary for their Government, and for the most happy State of them all: If God could not controul Angels and Men, reward and punish the good and bad as he pleaseth, the World would be all Misery and Confusion. But contrary-wise, Pride, the opposite to Humility, which is to love and desire Power for it self; an Affectation to do what one lists, Good or Evil; to have all others Wills and Actions at our command; to strut and swell with it; to make all know it, which may be in doing mischief, as well as good; all this, I say, hath no place in Heaven. It dwells only in Earth and Hell. The good Angels imitate their Maker, and these mighty and powerfull Spirits are so humble, as to be the Servants of
good

good Men here below. Whence we Mor-
tals may be advised, that the Vertue of
Humility in general, as mean a thing as it
may sound or seem, and that Branch par-
ticularly of Condescension to the lowest
Acts of Charity and Goodness, where it
hinders not greater, is an Imitation not
only of Angels, but of God Almighty
himself. But to return to our Observati-
on. This gracious Condescension of God
may be (if we please) justly raised by
the distinct Consideration of three things.
(1) That he vouchsafes to be reconciled
to his own Creatures. There is infinitely
greater distance between God, and the No-
blest of his Creatures, than there is be-
tween the greatest Emperour upon his
Throne, and the most despicable Beggar
upon the Dunghill. (2) To the meanest
of his reasonable Creatures, and that is
Man. It might seem more decent to do
it to Angels, but to such a contemptible
thing as Man is great indeed. *Lord, what
is Man, that thou art so mindfull of him, and
the Son of Man that thou thus vifitest him,*
Psal. 8. 4. And (3) to Man so mean a Crea-
ture, and yet so proud and willfull a sinner
as some are at least in great Degree, (and
the worst are not excepted) who careless-
ly and contemptuously, continually pro-
voke

voke him, who defie him, proclaim War against him, and are resolved to persist and die in their Rebellion, and Enmity against him. But we leave these things to further Meditation.

IV. The 4th. observable in the Text, is the Instrument of Reconciliation, the Person whom God makes use of in the Execution of his Counsel, and Design of Reconciliation, and that is *Christ*, ἐν Χριστῷ, i.e. by Christ. Such is the ordinary Hellenistical use of the Hebrew [כ]. So we have it, *Acts* 13. 39. ἐν τούτῳ rendered by him all that believe are justified. Here might be a large Field of Discourse, by particularizing the manner and method, which Jesus Christ, God's Messenger to Mankind, sent to effect and execute this Design of Reconciliation, makes use of: We shall at present do little more than name them. The (1) with which God by Jesus Christ began the Execution of his Designs, was the miraculous History of Christ, from and before his Birth, to his sending the promised Gift of the Holy Ghost. This was all along the most evident Proof of his Mission and Commission, from God for this Affair, and it was necessary in order to his entering upon, and continuing his Negotiation. (2) The 2^d. was his Doctrine.

Here

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Here Jesus was to explicate, open and declare his Message and Business more particularly and distinctly. He was to tell them who and what he was, from whom he came, his Relation to Man, &c. that He was the one only true God, infinitely great, holy and just; but above all, good, mercifull, compassionate, infinitely desirous of their Welfare, and that they might be saved, or be the Objects of his Eternal Favour and Delight, not of his Justice and unavoidable Severity, that he was their Maker and Father; that he would not only receive their Return and Submission with Joy, but effectually help and assist them in it. Such a taking and moving Representation of God, is that of the Parable of the Prodigal. He was more-over to acquaint them with the conditions and terms of Reconciliation, which were Repentance, future Obedience, humble Submission, and sincere Application for pardon, and that for the Sake, and upon the Account of himself, or of what he was appointed by God to do and suffer, the Consequence of their accepting or refusing the Condition so graciously offered by God. All this was done in his Precepts, Promises, Threatnings: And thus far the Application was made immediately to Man, to take away the

the Enmity that was in his Nature and Will to God, and to qualifie him for the Amity and Friendship of God. The (3) of these means of Reconciliation, was his Merit and Oblation of himself as a Sacrifice: His most exactly vertuous, holy and perfectly obedient Life to God, and being an Universal Sacrifice for all Mankind, who had been Offenders. By the Interposition and Consideration of these, it became the Justice, Clemency and Wisdom of God, to be mercifull and benevolent to rebellious Mankind, in all these Instances, presently to be mentioned: That is, it was the wisest way, and of best effect to the World, better than to have been reconciled without it. And this part of the means respecting God immediately, was to remove the Enmity on his side, that he might be just, and yet not cast away all kindness and care, even of all degenerate Man; but particularly be the Justifier of all them that believe, who should now become dutifull and obedient to God, by Jesus Christ. We may add to these a fourth, and that is the continual Intercession of Jesus Christ in Heaven, by which he still carries on the reconciling Design between God and the World. For I make account that his Intercession in Heaven,

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reacheth as far as his Propitiation here upon Earth; that is, to the whole World, bad and good, unconverted and converted, impenitent and penitent. For the impenitent he interceeds to God for his patience and forbearance, and his continuance of his Blessings inward and outward: All the means of Repentance and Conversion to them, so long as God in his infinite Wisdom shall think fit. For the penitent and good he interceeds for their general Pardon, upon their general Repentance, and particular when they fall into any sin. He interceeds also for their improvement, advance and perseverance in their Duty and Obedience to God, that they might be preserved through God's Power and Care, through Faith unto Salvation, and finally, at last, be put into possession of immortal Bliss, be with him where he is, and see and partake of his Glory.

V. The last observable in the Text is, one principal Effect of God's Reconciliation, *viz. Not imputing their Trespases unto them.* I call it but one, because there are several others, as we shall presently shew. More-over, this is an Effect of Reconciliation, which must necessarily be preceded by others, and without which this will never follow. For it is not so well

well said by some very learned Men, (as it seems to me) that there are several Degrees of Remission of Sins, as it would, that there are several Degrees, or rather Effects of Reconciliation. Suspension of punishment is not remission. Some of these must go before the other. Let us see them in order briefly. (1) The first Effect of God's Reconciliation to the World, is his Forbearance and Long-suffering ; not presently seizing and bringing Sinners to execution, that he strikes not immediately upon our Indignities and Provocations, and not only so, but during this time of his Patience, affords them the Obligations, Means, Helps and Assistances of Repentance and Reformation. Such are all corporal Blessings, his holy Word and Spirit, the Examples of holy and vertuous Men, who by these means have been converted, and some of them perhaps irresistibly on purpose, that they might be the means of others Conversion or Confirmation, and Improvement in Goodness. All this we all owe to the Merits, Oblation and Intercession of Jesus Christ. I say all, both bad and good, *i. e.* those who generally live according to the Flesh, who are under the Power of Lusts and inordinate Appetite,

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and those who live according to the Spirit, who are generally governed by their Conscience, the Fear and Love of God, a Divine Principle inspired or commanded by the Holy Spirit. The bad are almost perpetual Sinners, the best in this Life are not altogether without Sin; the bad live in Sin, the good are sometimes overtaken by it. Now it may be truly said, that it is for Christ's Sake, that God is so far reconciled to the World by him, as to forbear the present Execution of his displeasure or punishment, and to continue the motives and means of better Behaviour; that he waits a bad Man's general, and a good Man's particular Repentance; that he gives time and means for the Reformation of the one, and recovery of the other.

(2) A 2^d. Effect of God's Reconciliation, is pardon of sin upon repentance, not without it. Upon our Sanctification by the due use of the means afforded us, follows Justification, being favoured by God, and particularly in the Forgiveness of past sins. This we see in the Effect, especially mentioned in the Text, *not imputing*, &c. but not exclusively of all others. 'Tis that which the Apostle thought fit to mention to the Jews, with whom his dispute was about this matter.

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The Question between them was, since all men are sinners, as at least the Apostle affirmed, how should their Sins be forgiven, or their Trespases not imputed unto them. The Apostle tells them, that it was by Jesus Christ; that God was in general reconciling the World to himself by Christ; and among other Effects of it this was one, more especial and remarkable, remission of penitent Sinners (none else) for Christ's Sake.

Accordingly, we see the Apostle every where to insist upon this Article: They were to preach among all Nations, repentance and remission of sins; and through this Name is preached to you forgiveness of sins, *Acts 13. 38.* A 3^d. Effect of God's reconciliation, is a good Man's improvement in grace and holiness. As God for Christ's sake is pleased to afford men means whereby of bad they may become good, so he is pleased to continue or augment them, to encrease and multiply his influence of light, strength, comfort, and joy, in well doing, to make good men better, that they may persevere and be made more meet still, for conversation with the Saints in light. 4th. The last general Effect of Reconciliation, is Eternal Salvation, a Life immortal without sin or sorrow. After

the effects of affording means of conversion, and their proving effectual, remission of past sins, and perseverance in Holiness, we are to see God. God will settle us eternally in such a State of Life, where our Aspires after the spiritual Life of Wisdom, Vertue and Holiness, which were always here struggling, and sometimes oppressed and mastered by the insinuating or boisterous Affections and Appetites of the carnal Life, shall be perfectly gratified, constantly victorious, or without any Enemy to contest withall.

There are yet some more particular Effects of God's reconciliation taken notice of in the Scripture, such as peace of conscience, confidence, and full trust in God, access with boldness to the Throne of Grace, a constant, comfortable and joyous State of mind, which we leave to reflection and meditation. We have taken occasion, from one of the principal mention'd in the Text, to reckon up many others, that we may not think it the only one, and at once see the mighty Advantages of God's reconciliation and friendship by Jesus Christ, and our as great obligations of duty and affection to them. We shall briefly now conclude all, with an Inference or two, from what hath been observed and discoursed.

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From hence it follows, that we have a just Object of our Admiration and Adoration too, the goodness of Almighty God, and the blessed Jesus, the Author and Instrument of our Reconciliation ; we cannot give this condescending goodness of theirs too great Names. St. Paul speaks oft of this Love of God, and Christ most passionately. *God commendeth his love towards us, &c. Rom. 5. 8. And God who is rich in mercy, &c. Eph. 2. 4. Our Saviour himself in John 15. 13. Greater love than this hath no man, &c.*

That here we may be duely affected, consider we the Parties, what God, what we are. (1) God is the Party greatly injured, and most unjustly provoked by our contemptuous Disobedience, our stupid Ingratitude, our contracted Enmity, and Contrariety of Nature to him. God needs us not, our love and service what can it advantage him? Can a man be profitable to God? *Job 32. 2, 3.* God, whose Power is irresistible, who can avenge himself upon us, when, and as much as he pleaseth, though all his Creatures should be our Confederates, and undertake to defend and protect us. And what (2) are we? the Aggressours, the wilfull and obstinate Continuers of this Hostility. 'Tis

we who are his Creatures, Servants and Children. 'Tis we who are under unspeakable Obligations to him, who have received life and breath, and all things from him, and sometimes the highest Degree of Honour and Happiness in this Life, and preserved us there in safety, against all open and secret Enemies. 'Tis we whom he hath provided for, maintained, taken care of Souls and Bodies here and hereafter. 'Tis we who are sometimes the most ungratefull and undutifull, whom he is reconciling to himself, and beseeching us to be reconciled to him too. Finally, 'tis we who are the meanest of his rational Creatures, the Off-spring of Dust, the Inhabitants of Clay and Dirt, the reversion of Worms. 'Tis such as we that God is, as it were solicitous, to save and secure from his Anger and Justice, by perswading and assisting us to be reconciled, and to be friends with him. 'Tis not Angels he hath been so kind to, for what reason his Wisdom best knows; but to the Sons of men. And it seems as if God were like some Parents, most indulgent to their youngest and weakest Children. Oh! the unsearchable Riches of his goodness, the incomprehensible Dimensions of that love, which passeth all understanding? what, for the
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Supreme Monarch of the World, whose Throne fills the immense Spaces of the Universe, whose Foot-stool is paved with Stars, whose word immediately flyeth every where, and pierceth to the Center; at whose whispers Cherubins and Seraphims cover their Faces, worship and obey; for him to descend as it were from his Throne to a Worm upon a Mole-hill, to beseech his Friendship, and count his Reconciliation; to use all the gentle ways to persuade him to love, imitate and obey him, *i. e.* to be partaker of his own Nature and Felicity; to leave a Dunghill a mean and sordid manner of life, and to qualify and dress himself for an Eternal Inheritance, Residence and Conversation with himself in his own Palace? what love and goodness ever heard like this? But *2d.* it is not enough to wonder at so condescending goodness; but we are to comply with God's Offers of Reconciliation; most gladly be friends with him, and embrace the Motion, and industriously carry on the Design without ceasing, till it be compassed and secured.

The motives to this Advice may be reduc'd to two, (1) the Advantages of God's Friendship, (2) the terrible Consequences of his Enmity,

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(1.) The Advantages of his Friendship are all the good we are capable of. The Blessings of this present bodily Life, so far as they are good for us, are the meanest Effects of his favour; the spiritual ones of Wisdom, Knowledge, Vertue, Goodness, Comfort, Joy, and Peace of Conscience, are greater and nobler; but those of Heaven in quality and degree, and duration, are beyond our understanding. If God be our Friend, we need not fear the Power and Malice of any; if he be reconciled, he will either cause our Enemies to be at peace with, or defend us from them; as if he be our Enemy, he can expose us to them. If he love us in Christ, who, or what shall separate us from it? who shall hinder the Fruits and Effects of it? nothing; so saith the Apostle, with as just, as mighty a Triumph, *Rom. 8. 15.* But (2) what are the Consequents of God's Enmity at last? In few words, oft-times severe Punishment, in respect of this bodily Life, and hardened Heart, and a seared Conscience, and a reprobate Sense, to be forsaken of God, to heap one load of guilt upon another; to die senseless without Comfort, or with Despair and Terrour; and finally, to be condemned publickly to Eternal Misery, without mercy once despi-
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fed, but now too late sought after. If these things be true, as most certainly they are, if Religion and Reason are to be believed, then surely it is good to be well advised betimes, to make our peace with God, our Adversary, while we are in the way, and agree with him upon his own Terms, and whilst he continues such kind and gracious Offers unto us.

'Tis too true, that there are too many who will make light of such counsel. And what's the reason of it? Is it because they think there is no God; or that he is not powerfull, holy and just; or that he is all mercy, or rather softness; or that they are well enough with him, and sufficiently reconciled to him already? no more need to be answered to all this, than to ask one question. Suppose there were at this time, many shrewd Signs of the near Approach of the End of the World, and the Day of Judgment. Suppose the Sun and the Moon should stand still, as it did upon *Gibeon*, and in the Valley of *Ajalon*, in the Days of *Joshua*, for a Month instead of a Day, and the Sun to go backwards really as many Degrees in the Heavens, as it did Degrees on the Dial of *Ahaz*. Suppose all the Seasons of the Year Retrograde, or at a stand, and the Sun growing pale and sick,

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as it is said to have been in one of the Roman Emperour's Time.

Imagine we a-while from beneath, horrible Roarings in the Bowels of the Earth, and its lofty and massy Structures every where tumbled down, or swallowed whole into an Abyſs, the Sea boiling, and the Air filled with fiery and sulphureous Steams, hideous Storms of Thunder and Lightning, for some Days together. Let us Imagine, I say, all these, and (it is nothing new but what every one talks of) would the Men of Infidelity, Security and Bravery, be then of the same Opinion they are now? would they then question whether there was a God, and a great, just, and terrible one too? would they then think their Case well enough, and dare to expect the Universal Judgment, and appear with the same Unconcernedness and Confidence that they now pretend to?

Should we not rather see all but a few penitent, sincerely, vertuous Souls, who were indeed at peace with God through Christ, and lived constantly in love and duty to him. I say, should we not see all the rest, except this small Number, with trembling Hearts, misgiving, accusing and condemning Consciences, crowding to the Churches and Altars; nay, every where, in
Streets

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Streets and Fields crying for mercy, and most humbly begging for Forgiveness and Favour? what would they refuse to be, or do, so they might have but a gracious look from an angry God, or a despised Saviour? and yet, perhaps, when they should find all this to prove a Mistake, and their Panick fears over, they would return to be the same they were before, and live as carelessly, and contemptuously, of God's most gracious Offers of Peace and Friendship, as ever, be as unbelieving, secure and confident, as they were in the Days of *Noah*, till Death or Judgment really come upon them, when all Repentance and Mercy, Designs and Conditions of Reconciliation are at an End. Nevertheless, hence it appears, how little reason they have for their present Infidelity, Carelessness and Presumption; what they would do then, they should do now. It is really as true now, that they ought to take care without delay, and to be well assured of being reconciled to God by Christ, as it will be, when God shall come to judge the World by Christ.

It remains only then to renew the Advice, and to repeat the Exhortation, to embrace and pursue our Reconciliation to God, with all due Thankfulness, and Sense
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of the Divine Goodness, with all Diligence and Industry. If God be in Christ reconciling the World to himself, I think, we may say, it is our Duty and Interest to be reconciling God in Christ to our selves also by Repentance, and constant future Obedience; and in order thereto, by effectually making use of those means, Jesus Christ hath left us for that purpose; his holy Doctrine and Example for our direction and encouragement; his holy Spirit for our Assistance; his meritorious Life and Death for our comfort, satisfaction and assurance. And in his stead it is, as the meanest of his Embassadors, according to our Duty and Trust, we beseech, and earnestly pray, all to be reconciled unto God.

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*Books lately printed for Walter Kettilby, at the
Bishop's-Head in St. Paul's Church-Yard.*

1. **A** Treatise relating to the Worship of God, divided into six Sections; concerning; 1st, The Nature of Divine Worship. 2^d, The peculiar Object of Worship. 3^d, The true Worshippers of God. 4th, Assistance requisite to Worship. 5th, The Place of Worship. 6th, The solemn Time of Worship.

2. A Defence of reveal'd Religion; in six Sermons, upon *Romans* 1. 16. Wherein it is clearly and plainly shown, that no Man can possibly have any real Ground or Reason to be asham'd of Christianity: By *Henry Halliwell*, M. A. and Vicar of *Cowfold* in *Sussex*.

3. Miscellanies; in five Essays: 1. Upon the Office of a Chaplain; 2. Upon Pride; 3. Upon Cloaths; 4. Upon Dealing; 5. Upon general Kindness. The four last of which, are by way of Dialogue: By *Jer. Colliers*, A. M.

4. Miscellanies upon moral Subjects, the second Part: By *Jeremy Collier*, A. M.

5. The Mysteries in Religion vindicated; or, the Filiation, Deity, and Satisfaction of our Saviour, asserted against *Socinians*, and others: With occasional Reflections on several late Pamphlets: By *Luke Milbourn*, a Presbyterian of the Church of *England*.

6. Apparatus ad Theologiam, in Usum Academicarum: 1. Generalis; 2. Specialis. Auctore *Stephano Penton*, Rectore de *Glympton*, *Oxon*.

7. *Guardian's* Instruction; or, the Gentleman's Romance; written for the Service and Diversion of the Gentry.

8. New Instructions to the Guardian, shewing, that the last Remedy to prevent the Ruine, advance the Interest, and recover the Honour of this Nation, is, 1st, A more serious and strict Education of the Nobility and Gentry. 2^d, To breed up all their younger Sons to some
Calling

The Catalogue.

Calling and Employment. 3d. More of them to Holy Orders; with a Method of Institution from 3 Years of Age to twenty One: By *Stephen Penton*, Rector of *Glympsen*, Oxon.

9. *Johannis Antiocheni Cognomento Mallala Historia Chronica*, è M. SS. Bibliothecæ Bodleianæ. Præmittitur *Dissertatio de Authore*; per *Humph. Hodium*, D. D.

10. A Sermon preached before the King at *Kensington*, Jan. 13.—95. By *John Lamb*, D. D. Dean of *Ely*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

11. The Dean of *Canterbury's* Sermon before the King at *Kensington*, Sunday, Jan. 20.—95.

12. Dr. *Isbam's* Sermon at the Funeral of Dr. *Scott*, late Rector of *St. Giles's* in the Fields, March 15.—95.

13. Profitable Charity. A Sermon preached before the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, at the Parish Church of *St. Bridges* on *Easter-Munday*: By *Robert Grove*, Lord Bishop of *Chichester*.

14. The Doctrine of the glorious Trinity, not explained, but asserted by several Texts, as they are expounded by the Ancient Fathers, and later Divines: By *Francis Gregory*, D. D. and Rector of *Hambden Bucks.*

15. An Essay to receive the Necessity of the Ancient Charity and Piety; wherein God's Right in our Estates, and our Obligations to maintain his Service, Religion and Charity, is demonstrated and defended against the Pretences of Covetousness, and Appropriation. In 2 Discourses: By *George Burghope*, Rector of *Little Gaddesden* in *Hertfordshire*, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of *Bridgewater*.

The End of the Catalogue.

